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'Frustrating' wait to learn future of children's centres

By Eva Astreinidou

CASH-HIT children's centres have been told they must wait even longer to learn their fate.

Two Abingdon facilities are awaiting decisions on funding from Oxfordshire County Council to find out if they can reopen.

The South Abingdon and North Abingdon centres were temporarily closed in March and were expecting to hear about their futures on Monday.

That decision has now been pushed back until June 20 because of the general election.

Abingdon Town councillor Samantha Bowring has been pushing for funding for the South Abingdon Children's Centre since the plans to replace the county's 44 centres with eight regional hubs were announced in 2015.

After building a business case for the centre to be presented at Monday's cabinet meeting she was told that the decision on funding will be deferred for six weeks.

The meeting was to discuss whether or not the centre could be awarded the maximum amount of £30,000, which would be used alongside other stakeholders' investment to ensure the centre will re-open and stay open.

The cash known as transition funding is a temporary solution in which the centres have to find viable business plans to eventually become self-sufficient.

Samantha Bowring

Cllr Bowring said: "To me it is ridiculous we have to wait but I guess they are playing it safe. People need the services now.

"We have no choice other than to be patient but it is a bit frustrating as the centre remains closed for now which means there will be new mums who miss out during this period."

She said: "We think we have put in a business plan that addresses everything OCC has asked for so are optimistic of it being accepted and us getting the transition funding to launch the new project. We also received feedback that we've done everything we should be doing."

She added that there is still a bit to negotiate in terms of the lease, and said the decision could impact whether the centre was open outside of term time and at weekends.

She said due to school holidays, there might not be a concrete plan on how to use the funding until September-time.

North Abingdon children's centre has also been closed since March 31.

In the meantime, service users have been using a local community centre, which Cllr Bowring says is at capacity.

A county council spokesman said the cancellation was in line with the postponement of other key decisions following the announcement of the general election on June 8.

ABINGDON Lock is the place to go on safari after a huge giraffe popped up by the River Thames thanks to a mysterious artist.

The sculpture, named Geraldine, joins the crocodile, rabbit and tortoise – all life-size wood carvings created by the secretive 'River Banksy'.

Geraldine arrived under cover of darkness last week.

The identity of 'River Banksy' remains a mystery but he has been described by lock volunteer Frank Jordan, pictured above, as a "very close friend of ours".

Picture: Alistair Fear

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More reported offences show increase in crime

By Eva Astreinidou

DRUG offences, vehicle crime, and previously 'under reported' crime are on the rise in Oxfordshire.

The latest Thames Valley Police crime statistics from April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017 revealed more than 138,000 crimes were reported last year, with drug trafficking offences, hate crimes, sexual offences, and vehicle crime included.

Police attribute the increase to a rise in public confidence in reporting crimes.

The figures show that in the last 12 months, there were 138,710 crimes reported across Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire, a 7.2 per cent increase on the previous year (2015/16).

Trafficking of drugs has increased by 28.1 per cent, which the police put down to the number of warrants and pre-planned operations increasing to combat illegal drug activity.

Operation Stronghold, a campaign to encourage working with communities to tackle serious and organised crime, has so far led to 20 charges, half of which are for people in Oxfordshire.

In the Vale of White Horse, drug trafficking offences increased by 20 per cent, while vehicle interference increased by 30 per cent over the year.

In South Oxfordshire, vehicle theft has risen by 48.8 per cent.

Overall, sexual offences have increased by 4.2 per cent over the past year, with recorded offences of rape increasing by 9.3 per cent and non-rape sexual offences increasing by 1.6 per cent.

Harassment has overall seen a change of 12.7 per cent.

Murder has increased by 5.6 per cent – three of the recorded homicides are in relation to the deaths of the men at Didcot Power Station in February 2016 whose bodies were not found until August and September. The first body was found at the time of the collapse in February and was recorded in the 2015/16 figures.

Police also said the number of hate crimes increased by 8.1 per cent and this is expected to rise as victims continue to gain confidence in coming forward and reporting offences.

Following the release of the figures, Deputy Chief Constable John Campbell, said: "There are some increases in crime types, as well as increased victim confidence in reporting certain types of offences.

"In particular, the increase of domestic incidents, hate crime and some sexual offences further demonstrates the growing confidence of victims to report offences.

"These areas of crime have been under reported for years and I trust these figures show that, as a force, we have been successful in giving victims the trust to come forward, knowing they will be treated with compassion and sensitivity.

"Certain increases also reflect how proactive and successful our teams have been in targeting offending. Drugs and possession of weapons offences are cases in point. I am pleased to see that our crime prevention work and targeted operations, as well as the Stronghold campaign, are having an impact."

According to Thames Valley Police, the latest national figures show that Thames Valley is the fifth lowest region in the country for violent crime.

Bus driver honoured to win gold

A BUS driver is on 'cloud nine' after he took home a coveted award for his dedication and professionalism.

Gavin Francis, from Stockenchurch, has been driving his Oxford Tube coach for over 12 years, and was awarded the 'Top Express Coach Driver' at this year's UK Coach Awards.

Mr Francis, 65, was given the award after gaining praise for his friendly, engaging, and reassuring approach with passengers and for his ability to train and mentor new drivers.

He said: "I have been driving my coach up and down the M40 for over 12 years now.

"I always take pride in my job and love that I get to meet new people every day.

"I couldn't believe it when I heard I had been shortlisted alongside two other colleagues, so to take home the gold was even more of a surprise. I'm still on cloud nine."

Oxford Tube, the 24-hour coach service from Oxford to London, and three of Stagecoach's coach drivers were shortlisted for the UK Coach Awards earlier this year from over 100 nominations UK wide.

On the night, judges also awarded Oxford Tube with silver in the Express Operation of the Year category.

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Health trust to face prosecution over death of teenager

AN NHS Trust that took responsibility for the death of a teenager in its care is to be prosecuted by the Health and Safety Executive.

The HSE confirmed it will prosecute the Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust under Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, following an investigation into the death of Connor Sparrowhawk.

The 18-year-old, *pictured*, suffered an epileptic seizure and drowned while taking a bath at the trust's Slade House in Headington in 2013.

Despite initially claiming he died of natural causes, the trust eventually accepted responsibility for Connor's death in June last year and offered the teenager's family compensation.

Julie Dawes, the interim chief executive of Southern Health, told the Oxfordshire Guardian:"The Health and Safety Executive has informed the trust of its intention to prosecute in relation to the death of Connor Sparrowhawk in July 2013.

"Connor's death while in our care could have been prevented and we would like to once again offer our unreserved apologies to his family.

"Since 2013 significant improvements have been made and the organisation continues to do everything it can to improve the quality and safety of services. The trust is unable to comment further at this time."

No court date has been set.

The trust is also being prosecuted by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) over safety after an unnamed patient suffered serious injuries during a fall from a low roof at the trust's Melbury Lodge site in Hampshire.

Kind-hearted teenagers are honoured for charity efforts

By Matthew Brown

GENEROUS teenagers from a Culham school have been recognised for their kind-heartedness.

The youngsters have worked tirelessly over the last two years to raise over £1,000 for a school in Nepal, the homeless in Oxford and the Sue Ryder care home in Nettlebed.

Pupils from the Interact Club at the European School were rewarded for their selfless efforts by receiving a formal charter from Joy Arnott, district governor of the Rotary club.

"It's been a great year," said Charles Sayers, president of Interact.

"We have had lots of fun and, importantly, helped those worse off than ourselves.

"At the same time we have learnt how to work as a team and get the best from everyone."

The club, made up of young people aged 12 to 18, raised the money by hosting various events such as cake sales and face painting.

They also organised a Christmas collection for the Gatehouse Charity that assists the homeless in Oxford with essential items such as toiletries and underwear.

Their next fundraising drive is at the Culham Festival with a cake sale and face painting.

President elect of the Rotary club of Abingdon Vesper, David Barnett, said: "It's been great to help these dedicated young people learn to become the good citizens of the future and to continue to support those who join the club."

Interact at Culham School has 17 members and will transfer to the Europa School from September. It aims to bring together young people to develop leadership skills while discovering the power of "Service above self", the motto of Rotarians throughout the world.

Members of Interact are congratulated by Joy Arnott

President Charles Sayers shows off the certificate

News Bites

Three arrested

ABINGDON: Police have arrested three men following a burglary at the Garford Crematorium site.

Tools and equipment were stolen from storage units at about 4pm on April 29.

The culprits left the scene in a white van.

A 25-year-old from Slough, and a 33-year-old and a 31-year-old from Surrey have been released pending investigation.

Meet the Fokker

ABINGDON: Aviation enthusiasts can delight in a three-hour flying display at the Abingdon Air and Country Show on Sunday.

One of the main attractions at Abingdon Airfield will be a performance from the Great War Display Team, featuring a Sopwith Camel and a Fokker triplane.

Highlights also include an RAF Memorial Flight Spitfire, Hurricane and Lancaster, the Jump4Heroes parachute display team and the de Havilland Sea Vixen 1950s fighter jet.

Boat trips start

ABINGDON: The scenic boat trips from Oxford to Abingdon will be available all week long starting this month.

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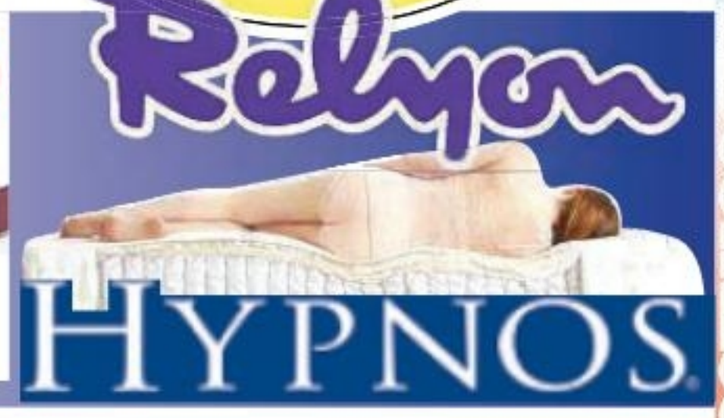

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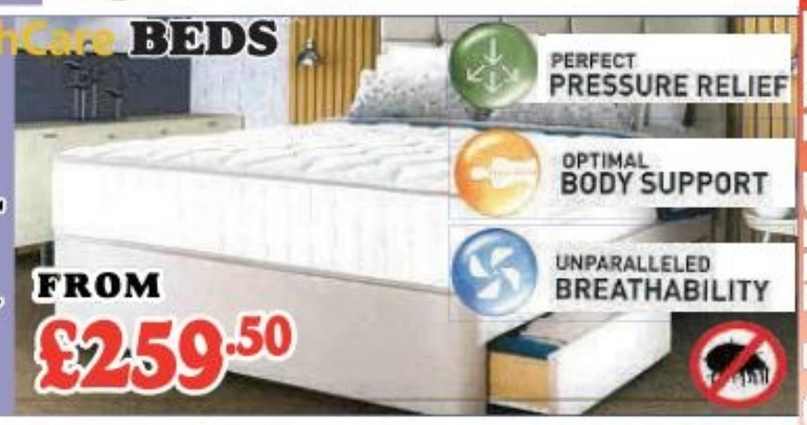

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Cyclist killed after collision with bus

By George Welch

AROUND 100 cyclists paid tribute to a woman killed in a collision with a bus on Botley Road in Oxford.

Police confirmed a 31-year-old woman, named as Claudia Comberti, died after the collision with a bus on Tuesday afternoon.

Ms Comberti, who was studying at Oxford University, was pronounced dead at the scene.

On Wednesday, the cyclists took part in a ride in her memory - one holding a symbolic empty white bicycle.

The driver of the Oxford Bus Company double decker is being treated for shock and the exact nature of the incident is not known at this stage.

Phil Southall, managing director of Oxford Bus Company, said on Tuesday the firm was aware that one of the their vehicles had been involved in an incident with a cyclist.

He said the bus was operating the 4B service towards the city and Wood Farm and the incident took place in the vicinity of McDonald's on Botley Road.

He added: "It is far too early to speculate as to the cause of the incident and we are doing everything we can to assist the emergency services at this time.

"Our thoughts are with the friends and family of the cyclist and our driver who is currently receiving treatment for shock."

Hours of traffic delays were caused as the road was closed both ways after the incident which happened around 2.30pm, with no access to the A34. Botley Road was re-opened around 6pm.

Police officers are appealing for witnesses after the fatal collision.

Police staff investigator Julie Hunt, of the Serious Collision Investigation Unit based at Bicester police station, said: "I would like to hear from anyone who was in the area at the time of this incident, who witnessed it, or who has any information that could help with our investigation."

Contact police on 101 if you have any information.

John Lewis unveils construction partner

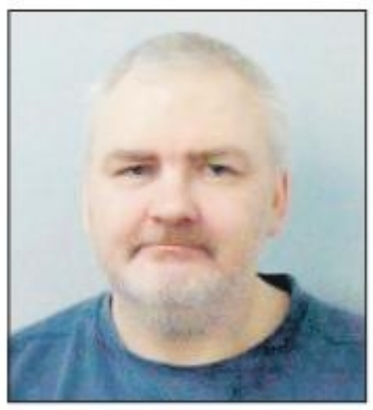
RETAIL giant John Lewis has appointed consultancy and construction firm Mace to build its new Oxford store.

The three-storey shop covers more than 140,000 sq ft and will open in October as the anchor store of the £440m Westgate shopping centre redevelopment in the city centre.

The department store has invested more than £18m in the new site and, once open, the shop will employ over 300 John Lewis partners.

Head of construction, environment and engineering for John Lewis, Tony Jacob, said: "Oxford is an important strategic location for us and we were clear from the beginning of this project that we needed to appoint a contractor who we knew could deliver to our high standards.

Regional director for Mace, Neil Hennessey, said: "We're thrilled to be building a relationship with such a prestigious British retailer."



Osney Mead explosion caused by 'fuel stored in flat'

A MASSIVE explosion that killed one man and left 40 households homeless is believed to have been caused by fuel stored in a flat.

The inquest on Thursday last week into 48-year-old Guido Schuette, whose body was identified nearly three weeks after the Osney Mead blast, was told about the fuel by emergency services.

He was the only person to die in the explosion on February 14 which flattened a three-storey block of flats in the Osney Lane and Gibbs Crescent area, west of Oxford city centre.

At the inquest opening at County Hall, Oxfordshire coroner Darren Salter said: "The position we are in is that the coroner's office is still waiting for the final police report and to find the cause of death. But I'm informed the cause of the explosion is believed to be due to fuel stored in one of the flats."

Mr Salter added that Mr Schuette, who was in his Gibbs Crescent flat at the time of the explosion, was "suffering some mental health issues".

Search teams discovered his body on February 18, four days after the Valentine's Day blast, and police said on February 20 that a post-mortem examination proved 'inconclusive'.

The authorities eventually confirmed the body was that of Mr Schuette on March 6.

With investigations ongoing, no date for the full inquest has been set.

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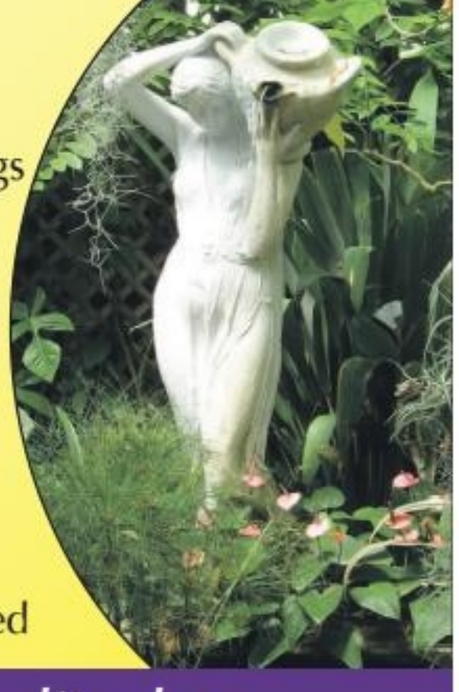
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County council elections 2017

Tories one seat short of majority for second time

By Eva Astreinidou

THE Conservatives missed out on gaining overall control of the county for the second election running – again needing just one more seat.

With 63 seats on offer, and 32 needed for a majority, more than 260 candidates awaited eagerly on Friday as ballot boxes were emptied to reveal results after months of campaigning.

As the results started coming in thick and fast at the White Horse leisure centre in Tilsley Way, Abingdon, many could be seen nervously waiting.

In the end, the Tories maintained their 31 seats from the last election in 2013.

The Liberal Democrats managed to gain two seats, up from 11 to 13, while Labour held firm with 11 again.

The Henley Residents Group earned their seat from the Conservatives and the Green Party lost their two seats, leaving them without any.

For UKIP, the run up to the elections was rather different to that in 2013 and reflected the national picture.

There were just over 10 UKIP candidates (three in Banbury divisions), as opposed to four years ago, where there were candidates for over half of the 63 seats on offer.

In Bicester North where 26 per cent had voted for UKIP in 2013, they only polled seven per cent this time.

The Tories received 41 per cent support across the county.

The Liberal Democrats were in second place, with 25 per cent of votes and Labour picked up 17 per cent.

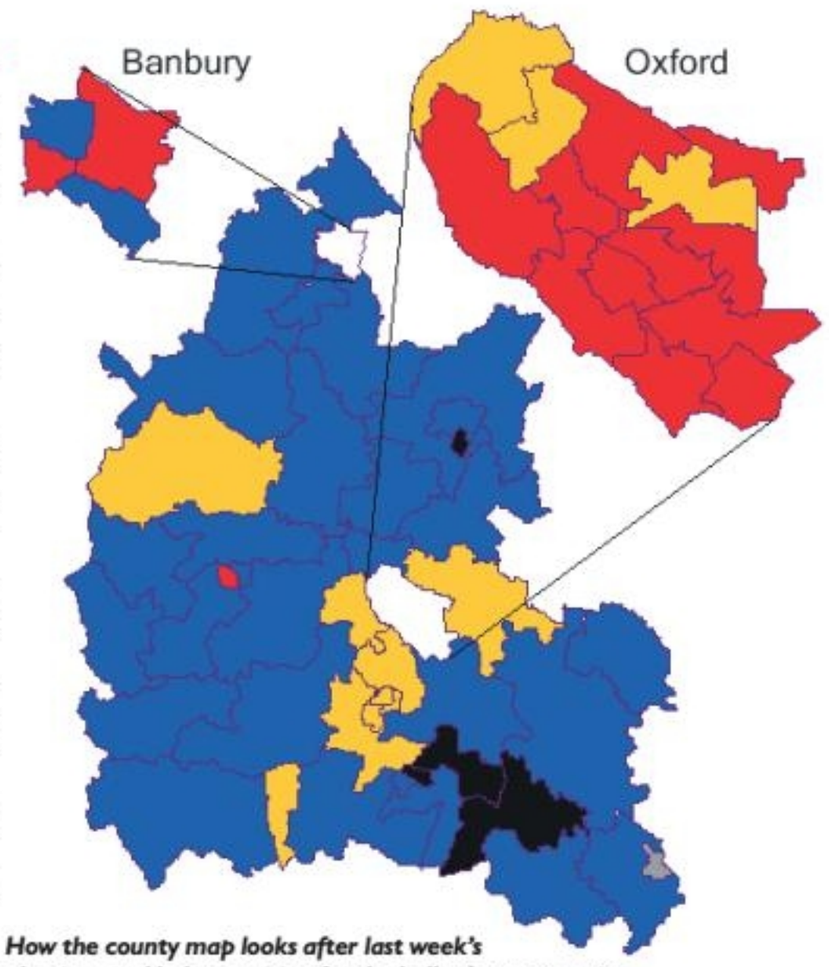
Four long-standing Lib Dem councillors stepped down from the 2017 race, leading to questions as to whether the party could maintain seats in those areas.

Liberal Democrat Judy Roberts claimed the seat in North Hinksey after long-time colleague Janet Godden decided not to stand and protected the representation in the area.

The same happened in Wheatley, where Anne Purse stepped aside, and Kirsten Johnston was then able to secure the seat for the Lib Dems.

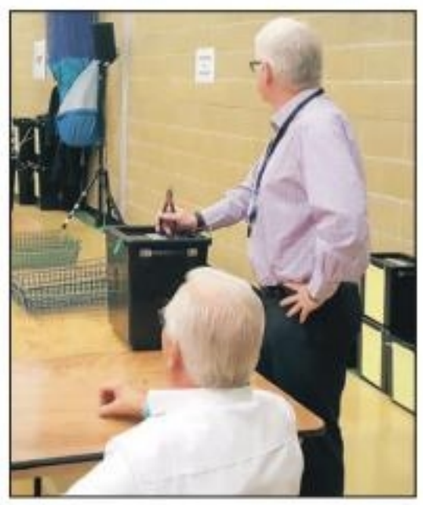
Independent candidates such as Lynda Atkins (Wallingford), Neville Harris (Didcot Ladygrove), Mark Gray (Benson & Cholsey), and Les Sibley (Bicester West) retained their seats in their divisions.

Overall, there was a 33 per cent turnout, up three per cent from 2013.



How the county map looks after last week's elections and below, waiting for the ballot boxes to arrive

Key changes



Henley Residents Group's **Stefan Gawrysiak** (1,747 votes) toppled David Nimmo Smith (1,362 votes) for top spot for the Henley-on-Thames division, earning a 48 per cent majority in the area.

Leader of the Green Party David Williams lost his seat in Iffley Fields & St Mary's, won in 2013. It went to Labour with **Helen Evans** taking it by 200 votes from Mr Williams.

Liberal Democrat **Emily Jane Smith** won the seat in Abingdon North from Tory Sandy Lovett, with a difference of over 535 votes, winning by 2,029 to 1,494.

Fellow Lib Dem **Liz Leffman** won in Charlbury & Wychwood, pushing Conservative Rodney Rose into second with a difference of 526 votes, with 2,105 votes for Leffman and 1,579 votes for Rose.

Labour's Joe Walsh lost his seat in Banbury Calthorpe to **Eddie Reeves** from the Conservatives, beating him by 1,294 votes to 825 votes.

Labour lost in Didcot West, giving the seat to Tory **Alan Thompson** by 167 votes.

Party	Seats 2017	% of votes	Seats 2013
Conservatives	31	41%	31
Liberal Democrats	13	25%	11
Labour	11	17%	11
Independent	4	3%	4
Labour & Co-operative	3	4%	4
Henley Residents Group	1	< 1%	0
Green Party	0	7%	2
UK Independence Party	0	< 1%	0

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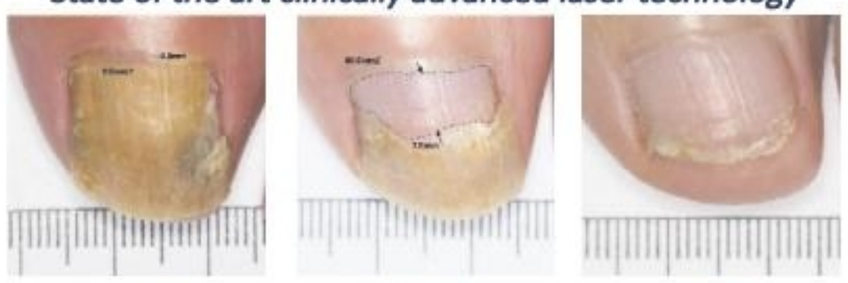

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DNA helps to convict over 1986 attack

By George Welch

A CHILD abuser already behind bars has been sentenced to a further 12 years for the attempted rape of a teenage girl more than 30 years ago.

After a three-day trial, Phillip Spriggs, 52, formerly of Oxford, was found unanimously guilty by a jury of one count of attempted rape at Oxford Crown Court on Thursday last week.

The attack happened at about 8.30pm on January 30, 1986, when the victim, a 13-year-old girl, was walking near Pullens Lane, Oxford.

According to senior crown prosecutor for Thames and Chiltern Crown Prosecution Service Susan Krikler, Spriggs "appeared from the bushes wearing a balaclava, put a gloved hand over her mouth, dragged her to the ground in the woods, threatened her and attempted to rape her".

Thames Valley Police (TVP) said officers carried out a "thorough investigation at the time of the offence", but that no arrests were made.

However, new DNA evidence emerged last year – 30 years after the attack – and officers were able to identify Spriggs as a suspect.

Spriggs, who was jailed for 17 years in 2015 for a string of sex offences against two children, was arrested and charged with one count of attempted rape on October 19 last year.

He was serving his sentence in HMP Wood Hill in Milton Keynes when TVP reopened the investigation into the 1986 attack.

Spriggs recieved his 12-year sentence for the 1986 offence, to run consecutively with his current term, at Oxford Crown Court on Tuesday.

Pete Beirne, head of TVP's Major Crime Review Team, which investigates significant unsolved crimes such as murders and serious sexual assaults, said: "I am pleased Spriggs has finally been convicted of this crime.

"The victim has shown incredible bravery throughout this process, and has had to live for the past 30 years knowing that the man who attempted to rape her has never been brought to justice for his crimes.

"New DNA evidence allowed us to identify Spriggs and I am pleased he has now been convicted for this offence.

"I hope the victim feels that justice has now been done now that this dangerous offender will have no prospect of freedom for many years.

"This case highlights that no matter how much time has passed the force's Major Crime Review Team will continue to investigate historic crimes, make arrests and charge individuals to bring them to justice."

Phillip Spriggs has been jailed for 12 years for the attempted rape of a 13-year-old girl in 1986

Principal Di Batchelor, front right, and staff and students from Abingdon & Witney College

Ofsted finds college is top class

A COLLEGE has been commended for its 'high ambition for learners' and its 'clear strategic decision'.

Abingdon & Witney College has achieved a 'good' overall rating, and its apprenticeships rated as 'outstanding' in the latest Ofsted inspection, despite tougher inspection rules.

Ofsted spent four days assessing staff, students, and teachers across the college's three main campuses, local businesses the college works with and adult learning centres.

The report read: "The college has strong and very productive partnerships with local employers, schools and other organisations. Senior leaders work well with their local enterprise partnership to identify and respond to local, regional and national priorities."

Inspectors were further impressed by the "welcoming environment" and the "inclusive and tolerant culture" they found during their visit.

College principal Di Batchelor said: "Everyone has worked extremely hard to show Ofsted what we are about, and I think we did that and more.

"To be judged as a 'good' college in a much tougher framework is a brilliant achievement – at the time of inspection only two colleges in England had received a more positive judgement than us since the new inspection regime started in September 2015. I am proud of everyone – from the careers advisors to the cleaners, the senior management team to the students – who made it possible."

In 2015, new Ofsted inspection rules were introduced and since then only three other colleges in England had been graded as 'outstanding' for their apprenticeship schemes.

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Man jailed for two violent attacks

By Eva Astreinidou

A MAN has been jailed after he hit a man on the head with a glass and punched a young woman.

Dean Sturgess has been sentenced to prison for two separate incidents of wounding and inflicting grievous bodily harm.

The 30-year-old formerly of Danvers Road, Oxford, appeared at Oxford Crown Court on May 4 in connection with both offences.

On the evening of August 28, Sturgess became involved in a verbal altercation with a man in the beer garden of the Red Lion pub in Albion Street, Chipping Norton.

Another man – the 42-year-old victim – went over to try and calm the situation down.

As he walked away he was struck on the head with a glass by Sturgess and knocked unconscious.

The victim required hospital treatment, including seven stitches to a wound on his head.

Sturgess was arrested on August 31, 2015 and charged on May 9, 2016.

He pleaded guilty to the offence although he initially insisted he was acting in self-defence.

The second incident took place in Gloucester Green, Oxford on August 24, when Sturgess assaulted a 23-year-old woman by punching her.

The victim fell backwards through a wooden table and hit her face on the floor, losing her two front teeth and sustaining a cut to her nose.

Sturgess was arrested on August 30 and charged on October 5.

He was found guilty following a trial at Oxford Crown Court and given a combined sentence of six and a half years.

Following the trial, PC Lydia Jackson from Cowley police station, said: "This was an alcohol-fuelled attack on a young woman in Oxford city centre.

"I am glad that the judge has passed such a serious sentence on the defendant, and I hope that this acts as a deterrent for anyone committing violent crime within our communities."

Investigating officer of the Chipping Norton offence, Detective Constable Darren Pomroy from Banbury Force CID, said: "This assault was a needless and unprovoked attack, on a member of the public that was trying to help calm the situation down so that he and others could continue their evening out.

"The case was prolonged by the defendant's insistence that he was acting in self-defence, before finally accepting the charges in court.

"The sentence sends out a message that violence and serious anti-social behaviour is simply unacceptable."

Dean Sturgess has been jailed

Firefighters honour fallen colleagues

STATIONS across Oxfordshire marked the first Firefighters Memorial Day in the UK.

Firefighters took a minute out of their busy day at midday on Thursday last week to stand and remember those who have fallen in the line of duty.

The memorial day will be held annually from now on.

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service said Firefighters Memorial Day is primarily intended for remembering the ultimate sacrifice of those fallen firefighters who died while serving their communities.

A spokesperson added that it is also an opportunity "to acknowledge the bravery and dedication of all serving and former firefighters for their commitment to saving lives and protecting our communities across the world".

Station manager Mark Ames said: "Firefighters Memorial Day coincides with International Firefighters Day that was initiated following the deaths of five firefighters in Linton, Victoria, Australia in December 1998.

"We must never forget our fallen colleagues from near or far and we must never stop making this career as safe as we possibly can."

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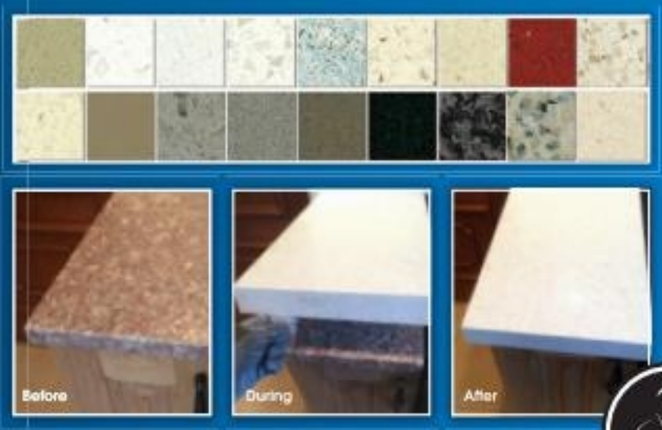

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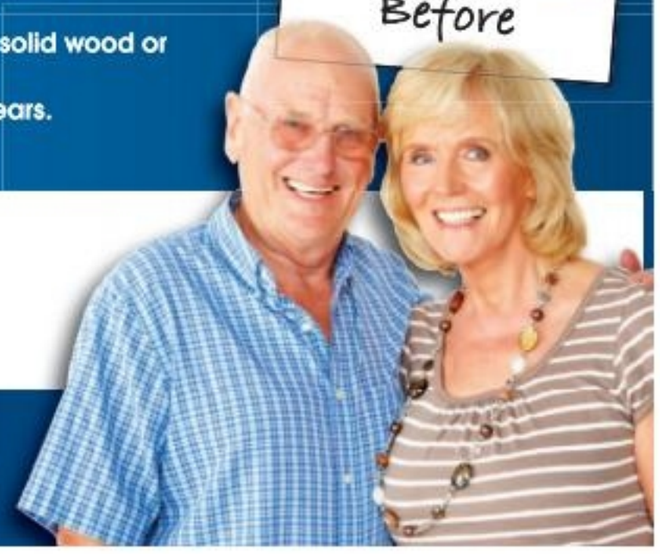

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Pop-up first aid brings in the cash for St Johns

THE life-saving work of volunteers from Kidlington St John Ambulance has been given a welcome boost thanks to donations from the community.

Since December, nearly £4,000 has been raised to support the work of the first aid charity.

A team of St John Ambulance volunteers were in the village at the end of last month to set up a 'pop-up' stand outside Barclays on the High Street.

Steve Surman, cadet unit manager in Kidlington, said: "We have received such amazing support from the local community. But, as well as raising money for St John Ambulance, we hope we've raised awareness of the importance of first aid too."

Kidlington volunteer and unit president Clare Phillips added: "On behalf of all of our volunteers I would like to say a huge thank you to all those who have contributed to our fundraising efforts. Your support is very much appreciated."

The group – including adults, Badgers (7 to 10 years) and Cadets (10 to 17 years) – offered passers-by the chance to learn first aid, as well as being able to give a donation to St John Ambulance.

A total of £343.74 was raised and several people showed interest in joining the Kidlington group.

This followed local support given in December to the St John Ambulance Christmas Float, which raised £3,390 as it toured the streets of the village.

For more information on St John Ambulance, visit www.sja.org.uk or call 08700 10 49 50.

Gym to offer patients a headstart in treatment

By George Welch

VOLUNTEERS, patients and politicians celebrated as the ribbon was cut on a redeveloped facility that supports those affected by brain injury.

Headway Oxfordshire unveiled a new specialised gym built within their activity and rehabilitation centre with equipment built specifically for those with limited movement and spatial abilities.

Our charity of the year, Play2Give, helped raise nearly £5,000 towards the £28,000 gym gear.

As part of the overhaul three regular gym machines were replaced with seven new physiotherapy exercise machines developed to exercise different areas in the body.

Speaking after Friday's opening, P2G founder Andy Baker, who suffered brain injuries at birth and sustained a head injury as a child, said: "The reopening was a truly special moment and a great pleasure to be among so many to celebrate all that has been achieved.

"The grand reopening was a lovely occasion. To see how the centre has transformed and what it has become from the drab old building that it once was is extraordinary.

Celebrations at the opening of Headway Oxfordshire's new centre

"Headway has lost a majority of its funding from the county council, so this is where funds to keep the service running – and continue to support the hundreds of people like myself with brain injuries and their carers – is vitally important."

The new gym and equipment was unveiled alongside a new outdoor space, a relaxation room and a 'Café Neuro', a café that gives people the chance to come together and share each others experiences, while also getting more information from local support groups.

Headway Oxfordshire's president Baroness Susan Greenfield cut the ribbon at the charity's Kennington base.

Headway CEO Jamie Miller said: "After several years of planning and fundraising, it was fantastic to finally see the fruits of our hard work come to fruition and to share this moment with our service users, friends, supporters and generous sponsors, whose contributions made this possible.

"We are hugely proud of our new facilities and most importantly, the positive impact this will have on those that access our services."

P2G is hoping to raise £10,000 for Headway and it's other benefactor Oxford Children's Hospital this year to mark its 10th anniversary.

To donate to the appeal, visit tinyurl.com/zksd8xx

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Land deal brings canalside development a step nearer

By Samantha McGregor

PLANS for a major redevelopment of Banbury's canalside have moved a step closer after a multi-million pound land deal.

Cherwell District Council has bought the former Antelope car dealership site opposite Morrisons supermarket in Swan Close Road for £2.15m.

The council's longer term plan for the canalside is to redevelop it for homes, commercial and retail units.

The former owner was Newcore Capital Management, which closed the Nissan dealership last September.

The 0.9-acre site currently includes a modern showroom with offices, petrol station and garage.

Adrian Colwell, head of strategic planning and the economy, said the acquisition represented an "exciting future for Banbury" which would feature the canal at the heart of it.

He said: "The canalside area along the Tramway industrial estate has been identified as a key site for regeneration within Cherwell District Council's approved Local Plan and that includes the former Antelope site.

"The canal is a unique feature within the town and we want to capitalise upon that by making it a focal point where people congregate for business, leisure and pleasure.

"The purchase of this site marks the first step towards transforming that whole area into a cosmopolitan mix of residential, commercial and retail uses, which will create new homes, jobs and leisure opportunities for the town."

Separately, Castle Quay owner Aberdeen Asset Management is waiting for planning approval for its £35m project to extend the shopping centre to build restaurants, a supermarket, hotel and cinema.

Cherwell's adopted Local Plan, which outlines key development sites across the district until 2031, includes 26 hectares to be developed as part the Banbury canalside regeneration project.

Eventually 700 homes will be built as well as almost four acres of employment land for offices and town centres uses.

The development, which will front on to the canal, will include new footways and cycleways as well as new pedestrian and cycle bridges over the Oxford Canal, River Cherwell and railway.

The canalside regeneration will include areas such as Tramway industrial estate, Canal Street and Upper Windsor Street as well as the Antelope garage site.

The council plans to rent out the garage area until the rest of the regeneration site is bought.

The petrol station and, above, showroom at the former Antelope car dealer in Banbury

Alert over fake police officers

OXON: People are being warned to be on their guard after fake plain clothes police officers made checks of wallets, purses and personal items.

The scam involves a stranger who asks victims for directions or hotel recommendations.

Other fraudsters join in and pretend to be police officers and ask to look at personal items.

Victims have reported being handed their personal items only to realise a quantity of money or valuables is missing.

Teen assaulted

THAME: Police are appealing for witnesses after a teenage boy was assaulted after being followed by a "large group" of young people.

Three boys met near Lord Williams's School, about 4.30pm on Wednesday, April 26, and were followed by the large group as they walked to the town centre.

A confrontation took place in the area of the Lower High Street and a 16-year-old boy from the smaller group was spat at by others in the larger group and punched in the face.

Call PC Downes via 101 quoting URN 860 28/4.

Blue box swap

N OXON: Residents who still use blue recycling boxes can now upgrade to a wheelie bin free of charge.

Cherwell District Council has decided to stop supplying the boxes as they are a source of wind-blown rubbish and are less cost effective.

It is hoped the move will also increase the district's recycling rate.

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Adoption agency praised for finding homes for harder-to-place children

By Eva Astreinidou

AN ADOPTION agency has been praised for its work in helping 'harder to place' children find families.

Following an Ofsted inspection in March, the chief executive from Parents and Children Together (PACT), Jan Fishwick, said she was "absolutely delighted" that the agency has retained the outstanding rating it was first awarded in 2014.

She added: "It is incredibly hard to gain an outstanding rating and to retain this for a second inspection is even more of an achievement.

"I am immensely proud of all our staff and volunteers who have worked together as a team to achieve such an amazing result."

PACT placed 87 children with 62 families through its adoption services last year.

The inspection report said: "Children placed with PACT adopters are deemed the 'harder to place' (e.g. older children and children with disabilities) children, who may have been waiting for some time for a family.

"When considering the complexity of children's needs, placements are highly successful with a relatively low pre-order disruption rate.

"Children, despite their complex needs, live in safe, stable and secure homes with parents who are totally committed to supporting them throughout their lives."

The report concludes that "prospective adopters are extremely well equipped to deal with the emotional turmoil that is often displayed through their child's behaviour."

"Children are supported to come to terms with their disruptive backgrounds and the losses they have experienced in their lives."

Shirley Elliott, PACT's head of adoption, said: "I would like to thank everyone who has worked so hard to ensure that we are consistently delivering an outstanding quality of service to all adoptive families."

Last week, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) announced it is to create a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) for the Thames Valley to improve the way services are run.

The plan will mean combining forces with six other councils (Bracknell Forest, West Berkshire, Windsor and Maidenhead, Wokingham, Swindon and Reading) and two voluntary adoption agencies, one of which is PACT.

Between 2012 and 2015, 73 per cent of Oxfordshire children waited less than 16 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family.

This is the third highest figure out of 149 authorities across the country.

Garden centre helps hospice grow

A HOSPICE providing care and support for terminally ill children, young adults and their families has been boosted by more than £3,300.

The Notcutts Garden Centre Oxford, in Nuneham Courtenay, raised the funds for Oxford-based Helen & Douglas House from 5p plastic bags and other fundraising events at the centre.

Money raised via the pennies micro-donation scheme, where customers are encouraged to round up their purchase with the difference going to charity, was also added to the total.

The Notcutts team presented the cheque for £3,326.70 to the hospice's community fundraising manager, Alison Stone, at the centre on May 2.

Jonathan Tew, centre manager at Notcutts Oxford said: "Helen & Douglas House is a fantastic local charity which Notcutts Oxford has supported for many years.

"We will continue to do our bit to support the truly life-changing work they carry out in our community."

Alison said: "Thank you to Notcutts for their continued support and wonderful donation which will be used to provide vital support and medical care for young people with life shortening conditions and their families in Oxfordshire."

From left: Sarah Mallet, Zoe Winterbourne, Notcutts Oxford centre manager Jonathan Tew, community fundraising manager at Helen & Douglas House Alison Stone, and Ben Cullen and Helen Gibbons

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Ewe'll have a great time when Countryfile Live comes to town

By George Welch

SCHOOLCHILDREN and some newborn lambs have helped launched this year's Countryfile Live.

Woodstock Primary school pupils joined farmer and presenter Adam Henson at Blenheim Palace to invite fans to follow the progress of six lambs via social media in the run up to the August event.

The lambs are among the first born at Blenheim Palace this year and members of the public will be able to meet them at the Passion for British Livestock area at this year's event.

The outdoor extravaganza, sparked by the huge popularity of BBC One's rural magazine series, will feature all the Countryfile presenters returning to the picturesque grounds of Blenheim Palace from August 3 to 6.

The event follows on from the success of the inaugural Countryfile Live, which saw 125,000 people flock to the 100-acre site last August.

Mr Henson, one of seven Countryfile presenters, said: "I'm so excited to be back for a second helping of Countryfile Live, especially after the success of last year's event.

"I can't wait to see the thousands of people flock through the gates to celebrate everything that there is to cherish about the great British countryside."

Countryfile Live is set to be four days of live arena shows, hands-on activities, animal displays, debates, food, drink and shopping from over 500 independent retailers and lifestyle brands.

Fans will be able to keep up with the 'Countryfile Live Lambs' via social media, with regular access to video and photo updates by following @Countryfilelive on Twitter and the #cfllivelambs hashtag.

Countryfile enthusiasts can also question Charles the Blenheim shepherd on the Countryfile Live Facebook page at facebook.com/bbccountryfilelive.

Tickets are available from www.countryfilelive.com

Countryfile presenter Adam Henson marked the launch with some help from schoolchildren and lambs

Mobile tickets are coming to county's buses

BUS passengers in Oxfordshire can buy tickets on their phone for the first time.

Stagecoach bus company launched a mobile app on Sunday allowing passengers to buy and download tickets to their smartphones, ahead of boarding, as long as they have internet connection.

Passengers can also access live running times to check the status of their route, before and during their journey.

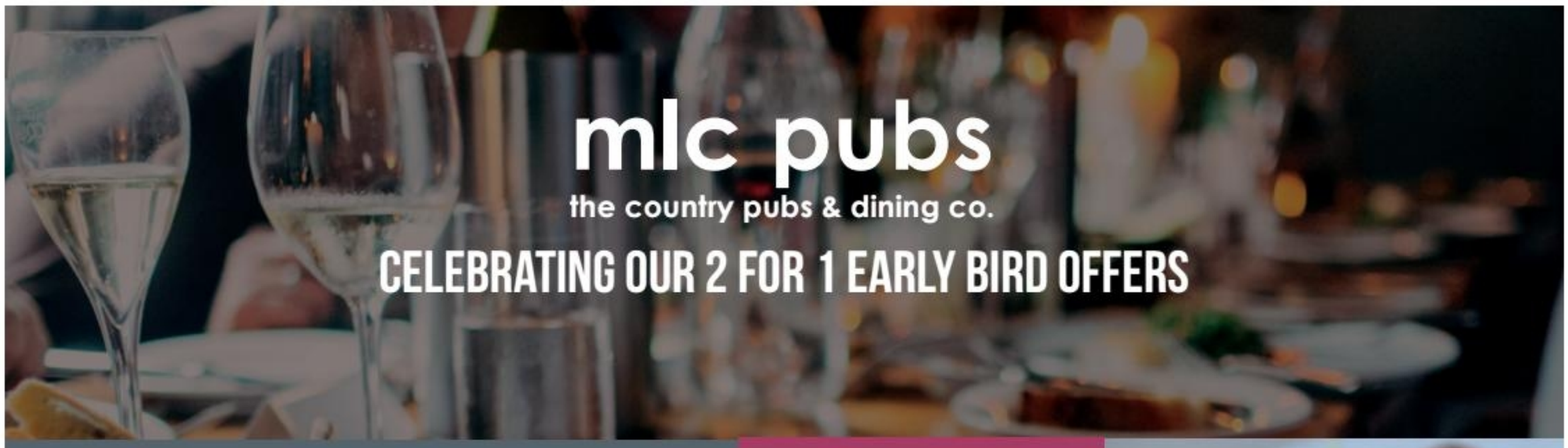
The firm is currently only offering weekly tickets on the app for the time being: the seven-day adult megarider, Plus, Gold, and Country tickets.

Karen Coventry, business development manager at Stagecoach in Oxfordshire, said: "Many of our customers are very savvy when it comes to using their smartphones to pay for bus travel.

"Since launching contactless payment in 2016 the number of passengers who are using Apple Pay and Android Pay is increasing every day.

"That's why we thought it was crucial to take our smartphone app to the next level by launching mobile ticketing.

"We know time is precious for everyone, so we hope the new payment method will provide even more convenience for our regular users."



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The winners of Thame Town Awards

Great and good of Thame celebrated

THE great and good of Thame have been honoured in the ninth Thame Town Awards.

The ceremony took place at The Barns Centre in front of 40 guests and town mayor Linda Emery.

Townspeople had been asked to nominate individuals, groups and organisations who they felt deserved recognition across categories include Lifetime Achievement, Volunteer of the Year, Creative Arts, Sporting Achievement and Service with a Smile.

Scooping the award for Creative Arts was Catherine Enticknap for setting up the successful Interchurch Productions.

The town council said the award was given for her work "motivating people of all ages to act, sing, dance and perform, with many going to be professionals".

The Sporting Achievement award went to Ian Blyth, the head coach of Thame Swimming.

It was awarded for his "passion and enthusiasm for the club and relentless energy for inspiring the best in each and every swimmer".

The Service with a Smile award went to Jason and Joshua Atalay for their top-class and friendly service and being "beacons of positivity and always smiling".

Sue Boyle was Volunteer of the Year for raising thousands for charity through her "popular and enjoyable" quiz nights.

Marking 25 years of running quizzes, the council said "she gives her time freely, enthusiastically and with a wonderful sense of humour". She was also nominated for her involvement in various community events.

The Lifetime Achievement award was given to Angus Lachlan to mark his 25 years' service to Thame Town Cricket Club.

A special award was given to Cllr David Dodds to mark 50 years' service to Thame Town Council. He received a two-night stay at The Billesley Hotel.

Helen Johns and Sonja Francis, members of 21st Century Thame, were presented with a glass bowl each to honour the "tireless" work they do to promote Thame.

Businesses urged to back BID

BUSINESSES across Banbury are being urged to get involved in an initiative to improve the town's economy.

A public meeting for firms to learn more about the Cherwell District Council-led scheme to create a Business Improvement District takes place on Wednesday at 6.15pm at Banbury Town Hall.

Independent and national retailers, leisure operators and professionals operating in the town – especially those in the town centre – are encouraged to have their say on a business plan.

The Banbury BID is expected to generate more than £1.25million over five years.

Adrian Colwell, Cherwell's head of strategic planning and the economy, said: "Banbury has so much to offer, but it is only through a positive and unified approach that we can truly realise its full potential as a premium business, visitor and retail centre.

"In many areas in the UK the BIDs have proved to be an effective way to improve footfall and boost sales since businesses can decide among themselves which extra services and activities they want for the area."

Among the actions proposed is filling empty shops, car parking discount schemes, business costreductions and public transport concessionary rates for staff.

A consultation will run until July when the first draft of the business plan will be published.

In October a ballot will take place over the plan.

News Bites

Midsomer walks

THAME: New Midsomer guided walks have been launched to show off some of the most frequently used filming locations for the popular ITV series Midsomer Murders.

Thame regularly features as either Causton or as any one of the many villages in the fictional show, which has been running for 20 years and is screened across the globe.

The tour takes in Thame landmarks including Thame Town Hall, the Market House, Rumsey's Chocolaterie, the historic Swan, Black Horse and Spread Eagle hotels as well as other locations.

School fundraiser

THAME: A 'Back to School' themed charity dinner last month has raised £5,765 for the mayor's two charities.

More than 100 people went to the event at Lord Williams's Upper School, which included food, entertainment and performances by students.

The mayor, Cllr Linda Emery, is supporting the Red Kite Family Centre and Thame Youth Projects.

Food partnership

THAME: The organisers of the annual Thame Food Festival have announced a three-year partnership with kitchen appliance manufacturer Magimix.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the event, which takes place at Thame Show Ground from September 30 to October 1.

Visit thamefoodfestival.co.uk

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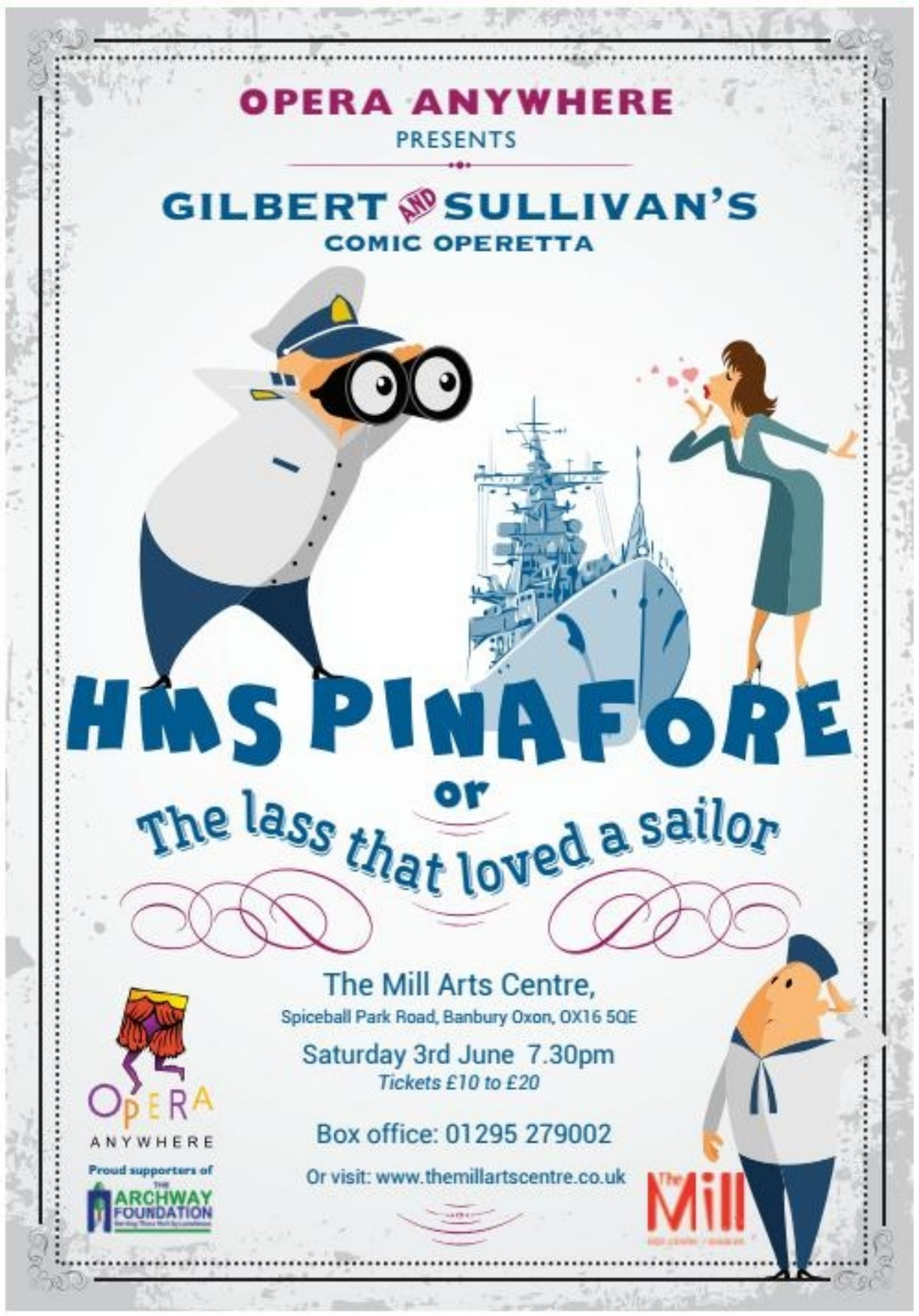

Competition

WIN tickets to John Lawson's Circus at Millets Farm!

Millets Farm Centre

THE Circus is back in Town! With lots of laughs, thrills and skills!

The award winning John Lawson's Circus voted 'Best Small Circus', will make its return to Millets Farm this May Half Term with an entirely human cast and new acts and routines.

Between Saturday, May 27 and Friday, June 2 you'll be able to see acts as diverse as Bippo the Clown, Miss Claire-Marie with her bubble fantasy and Angel and Victoria Boliov's juggling and slack-wire balancing, all overseen by the firm hand of Ringmaster Attila Endresz.

John Lawson's circus was founded in 1974 by ringmaster 'captain' John Lawson and was originally titled John Lawson's Circus De Reszke. After five years of appearing at outdoor events all over the country to great acclaim, Captain John bought a small second-hand 'flower show' marquee and with one Bedford lorry began touring the country with the possibly the smallest Circus in the land.

Closing date: Monday, May 22

From the first venue at Hadlow Playing Field, Hadlow near Tonbridge, Kent in September 1980 the show been consistently well received and has since grown both in size and reputation to its current position.

This great family entertainment has gained great reviews on its previous visits to Millets Farm and the new show looks set to top the previous highs. With three performances a day there will be plenty of opportunities to see this great event.

Win tickets!

We have 10 family tickets to this fantastic show and to be in with a chance of winning all you have to do is answer the following simple question:

Q: Name the clown in the John Lawson's traditional family circus at Millets Farm this coming May half term?

T&C's: No Dogs are allowed in the Big Top, over 18's only can enter, all children must be accompanied by an adult, the winners will be notified by email on Tuesday 23rd May and a date agreed to visit the circus, seats are guaranteed but not allocated, once a show date & time is chosen it cannot be changed, entrants need to be in by midnight Monday 22nd May '17 when the competition closes any entrants after that time will not be entered into the draw.

Winners will be notified by email.

To enter this competition and more like it, go online to

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Compere

Stan Stanley is a warm and genial comic with brilliant timing, who delivers smart, satirical observations that have more of an edge than their light-hearted handling and delivery suggest. TV appearances include **Russell Howards Good News - BBC2** and **Comedy Cuts - BBC3**.

"Stan and deliver! Stan Stanley can shake a crowd with his energetic pace." **Daily Telegraph**
"Smart and shameless the crowd devour his observations on popular culture." **The Stage**

Jeremy O'Donnell mixes sharp one liners with friendly story telling and sparkling off the cuff wit. His cheeky smile and friendly nature have endeared him to audiences all over Britain and as far afield as Berlin, Bahrain, Paris and Zurich.

"Lightning fast" **Evening Standard**
"A natural comedian" **South London Press**
"Best act of the night, by far, was Jeremy O'Donnell. Cutting edge funny" **The Daily Mirror**

Short spots
Two shorter spots in the middle section

Richard Lindesay

Ed Pownall

Headline Act

Bennett Arron is the only Jewish/Welsh Comedian on the Comedy Circuit. His humour is a cross between the paranoid angst of Max Boyce and the colloquial valley humour of Woody Allen.
His television and radio performing credits include; **Not Tonight With** John Sergeant, **Glee Time** (in which he hosted a series of six stand-up comedy shows) and most recently he was a Presenter on **Big Brother's Little Brother**. Bennett is currently working on a new sitcom for the BBC and recently supported Ricky Gervais on some of his tour dates.

"Genuinely original and funny" – ***The Times***
"Hilarious... clever wit... razor sharp" – ***The Standard***

Caution this performance will contain some adult humour as well as occasional bad language

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Competition

WIN family tickets to see The Wind In The Willows musical!

STUNNINGLY brought to life in a spectacular new musical by Oscar-winning screenwriter and creator of Downton Abbey Julian Fellowes and Olivier-Award winning composer and lyricist George Stiles and Anthony Drewe, THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS is the perfect summer treat for families!

Actor, comedian and presenter Rufus Hound will play the amazing Mr Toad, joined by West End stars Simon Lipkin as Rat and Craig Mather as Mole, EastEnders actor Neil McDermott as Chief Weasel, with Coronation Street and Boy Meets Girl star Denise Welch as Mrs Otter and West End legend Gary Wilmot as Badger.

Featuring eye-poppingly beautiful design, exuberant choreography and a gloriously British score, The Wind In The Willows brings comedy, heart and thrills to the world-famous London Palladium from June.

London Palladium, Argyll Street, London, W1F 7TF - 16 June - 9 September 2017

Kids Go Free on Monday to Friday performances for tickets booked by 31 May – details at WillowsMusical.com

Closing date: Friday, June 2

Win tickets!

We are giving Guardian readers the chance to win one of 2 family tickets to see The Wind In The Willows.

To enter, please answer the following simple question:

Q: What is the name of the author who wrote the novel The Wind In The Willows? Lewis Carroll, Kenneth Grahame or Beatrix Potter?

TERMS & CONDITIONS
There are 2x family tickets to be won. Each family ticket consists of 4x tickets for two adults and two children to see The Wind In The Willows and is valid for Monday to Friday performances until 31st July 2017. Tickets are strictly subject to availability. Tickets are non-transferable. No cash alternative is available. Travel is not included.

To enter this competition and more like it, go online to
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Puzzles

Sudoku

The objective is to fill a 9×9 grid with digits so that each column, each row, and each of the nine 3×3 sub-grids that compose the grid (also called "boxes", "blocks", "regions", or "sub-squares") contains all of the digits from 1 to 9. The puzzle setter provides a partially completed grid, which for a well-posed puzzle has a unique solution.

EASY/MEDIUM/HARD

	1	7		6				2
					7	6	3	9
		8	5	3		1	4	
5				8	4			
7	4						9	8
			2	9				5
	9	2		4	3	7		
6	3	5	1					
4				2		8	6	

		2				6		
7	1			4			5	8
		9	8		2	3		
	5			7			6	
			4		9			
	6			2			3	
		5	7		1	4		
1	3			9			8	2
		6				7		

	5	9						2
2			7			6		8
		7	2				4	
			3			8		
	1						3	
		6			7			
	7				6	1		
8		1			4			9
4						2	5	

This week's solutions

3	1	7	4	6	9	5	8	2
2	5	4	8	1	7	6	3	9
9	6	8	5	3	2	1	4	7
5	2	9	7	8	4	3	1	6
7	4	6	3	5	1	2	9	8
1	8	3	2	9	6	7	5	4
8	9	2	6	4	3	7	1	5
6	3	5	1	7	8	9	2	4
4	7	1	9	2	5	8	6	3

4	9	2	6	3	7	1	5	8
1	3	7	5	8	2	9	6	4
8	2	5	7	9	6	4	3	1
9	6	4	2	5	8	3	1	7
3	7	1	4	6	9	2	8	5
2	5	8	1	7	3	6	4	9
6	4	9	8	2	5	7	1	3
7	1	3	9	4	6	5	2	8
5	8	2	3	1	7	9	6	4

6	5	9	4	8	3	7	1	2
2	3	4	7	1	5	6	9	8
1	8	7	2	6	9	5	4	3
9	2	5	3	4	1	8	6	7
7	1	8	6	9	2	4	3	5
3	4	6	8	5	7	9	2	1
5	7	2	9	3	6	1	8	4
8	6	1	5	2	4	3	7	9
4	9	3	1	7	8	2	5	6

Quick Crossword

Across: 1 Interesting 9 End 10 Execution 11 Yacht 13 Deplete 14 Abacus 16 Stress 18 Startle 19 Waste 20 Attribute 21 Ass 22 Dragonflies

Down: 2 Nod Event 4 Emends 5 Trumpet 6 Noiseless 7 New Year's Day 8 Intersperse 12 Character 15 Untying 17 Return 19 Wheel 21 Ape

Cryptic Crossword

Across: 1 Eventuality 9 Ice 10 Calibrate 11 Tower 13 Service 14 Errata 16 Rapier 18 Ovation 19 Nonet 20 Extolling 21 Run 22 Present time

Down: 2 Vie 3 Niger 4 Unless 5 Liberia 6 Tradition 7 Little Women 8 Penetrating 12 Warrantor 15 Tiles 17 Indian 19 Night 21 Ram

Puzzles

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Two speed crossword

Quick Clues Across

1 Exciting attention (11)
9 Conclusion (3)
10 Manner of performance (9)
11 Sailing vessel (5)
13 Empty (7)
14 Counting frame (6)
16 Strain (6)
18 Take by surprise (7)
19 Squander (5)
20 Ascribe (9)
21 Donkey (3)
22 Long-bodied insects (11)

Quick Clues Down

2 Bend head quickly (3)
3 Happening (5)
4 Corrects (6)
5 Brass instrument (7)
6 Silent (9)
7 January Ist (3,5,3)
8 Scatter here and there (11)
12 Distinctive quality (9)
15 Unfastening
17 Go back (6)
19 Circular revolving frame (5)
21 Imitate (3)

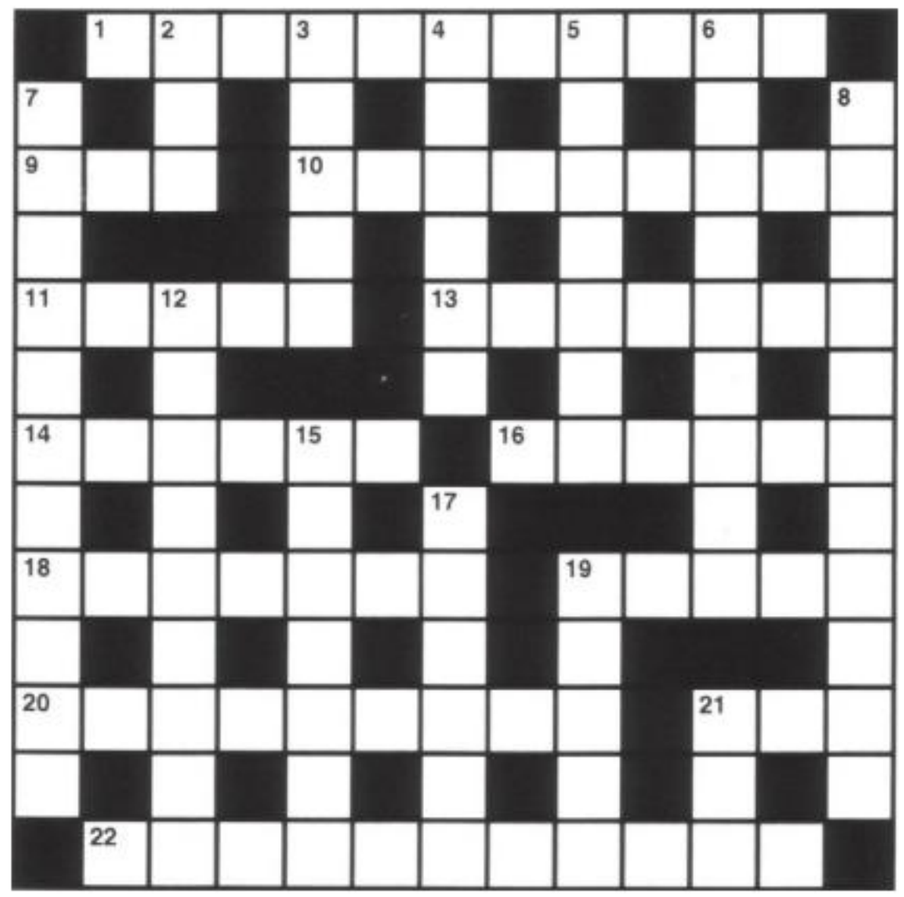
Scribble space

Cryptic Clues Across

1 Let Aunty vie with the change-over of any contingency (11)
9 3 down's cold centre (3)
10 Bail out in the box to check the measurements (9)
11 Ore who pulls a lot of weight can rise to a great height (5)
13 Useful way of starting a game (7)
14 Mistakes made by the traitor in time (6)
16 Sword for the god on the jetty (6)
18 No share of the speech (7)
19 Part of joint returned to group (5)
20 Praising the former tax on badly brewed gin? (9)
21 Stand as candidate while the show is on? (3)
22 Now for a birthday? (7,4)

Cryptic Clues Down

2 Compete in the review (3)
3 It is more agreeable to pull back about a hundred (5)
4 Except that the world assembly takes a smaller part (6)
5 A pound can make Spain and Portugal into an African country (7)
6 No, it comes back, and I move suddenly up for the custom, (9)
7 Now tell me it is rewritten as a. classic story (6,5)
8 Going further into the assessment, after putting up half a poem for ten to back (11)
12 Fight, rave, or be the one to give a guarantee (9)
15 Toys with the dessert? (7)
17 An Asian and I in a mix-up (6)
19 Time for a sound lady's champion (5)
21 Drive home the animal (3)



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Spring into Action

Now's the perfect time to replace your garden fence once and for all. Anna Ryder Richardson - Designer and Television Presenter - takes a closer look at Colourfence, the revolutionary low-maintenance system.

It's been ten years since I regularly graced TV screens helping transform people's living spaces with MDF and stripped floorboards. Recently it's been more "celebrity muck out" than "celebrity make-over" as I took up the challenge of owning my own Wildlife Zoo in Tenby. In this time I've learnt quiet a lot about fences and having researched the various options for my own benefit I thought I would share my knowledge with a wider audience.

The latest design processes mean there is now a tremendous array of fencing products for you to choose from, constructed from a variety of materials. Each has its own attributes, and ultimately it can often come down to a matter of personal preference. For me, there was one unique system that stood out as providing the best balance between price and functionality which eradicates fencing problems for good. Or for at least 25 years. Colourfence. For quality, value, longevity, aesthetic design, this fencing system ticks all the boxes. Fencing made for the 21st century that will transform the look of your garden which is supplied and fitted by a company whose customer service is as good as the product.

In my view, Colourfence is the 'Rolls Royce' of fencing – just without the exclusive price tag. What's more, it's guaranteed to stay in place in up to 130mph winds and is virtually maintenance free.

To find out how the experts from Colourfence might help you, I suggest you call **01865 582 171** and speak to their team.

"I honestly believe that Colourfence is the best general purpose fencing product on the market today!"

Colourfence: The ultimate garden fence?

For many Colourfence is perhaps the ultimate choice. For the last 15 years it's been widely used across the UK and has steadily gained a reputation for its quality. By using the highest specification Colorbond steel in the fence structure itself, complemented by the highest level of customer service from accredited Franchisees, Colourfence is now regarded by many as the premier fencing solution in the market. Immune to the rot and resistant to the weather that so quickly effects wooden fences, Colourfence has none of the drawbacks of wood - plenty of additional benefits and what's more it's better value!

Call **01865 582 171** for more information

Gardeners' Questions

Q Wooden fence panels just don't seem to last - is there a storm resistant alternative?

A The Colourfence system has been tested under cyclonic conditions to withstand storms with wind gusts up to 130mph. Unlike your wooden fence - once professionally installed - Colourfence really will stay up!

Q No matter what I treat my wooden fence with - nothing seems to prevent it rotting or looking shabby for very long.

A Treating your fence is a thankless and expensive task. It's also a losing battle. Wood simply want's to rot. Colourfence offers a low-maintenance alternative where by an occasional wash down will keep it looking great for up to 25 years! GUARANTEED!†

THIS WEEK'S JOB

†Terms and conditions apply - full details available on request

Step into Spring – with COLOURFENCE

The only garden fence you will ever need!

Every gardener knows that it pays to plan ahead. If you are one of the thousands of people who watched helpless, as winter winds battered their garden, it will not be a surprise that garden fences are almost always the first casualty. Whether you have previously patched, painted or simply prayed to keep your fence going, there's no escaping the fact that timber fences will always fall victim to the weather. With Colourfence you can put your garden straight once and for all. Colourfence is scientfically tested and cyclonically rated to ensure when professionally installed, it can withstand wind gusts of up to 130mph. Once it's up – it stays up and is guaranteed to look good year after year. Safe, extra secure and hassle free – you will NEVER need to paint it, treat it or patch it. An occasional hose down will be all you need do to keep it in top condition for years to come. In fact the system is so durable that Colourfence will guarantee† their fencing to last at least 25 years. Available in a range of colours to suit any garden, with or without decorative trellis, the highly skilled installation team make short work of their dramatic transformations. Your sad old fence will be e_ ciently cleared and replaced, leaving you to get back to enjoying your rejuvenated garden. Pricing is just as straightforward and equally attractive. Starting costs are in line with inferior timber systems but with no annual treatments required, Colourfence saves you time and money each and every year. Their aim is your peace of mind. With a 25 year guarantee† Colourfence speaks for itself and promises a lifetime of hassle-free enjoyment.

For more information and to arrange a FREE no obligation site visit simply call one of their helpful team on 01865 582 171.

COLOURFENCE

the revolutionary low-maintenance system

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colourfence.co.uk

†Terms and conditions apply - full details available on request

In detail:

- Virtually Maintenance-free.
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- Costs in line with far inferior timber systems
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Not a tale to turn your nose up at

You'd think that a poet and swordsman would have no trouble getting the girl but add in him having a huge nose and it makes things rather more complicated. Follow Cyrano de Bergerac's quest at the Oxford Playhouse this month. See inside for more

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Saturday May 13th

DAYTIME

BBC1

Pointless Celebrites, 6.25pm

6.00 Breakfast (S) **10.00 Saturday Kitchen Live** (S) **11.30 Mary Berry's Absolute Favourites** (S)(R) **12.00 Football Focus** (S) **1.00 BBC News;** Weather (S) **1.15 Bargain Hunt** (S) **1.45 Live Challenge Cup Rugby League** (S) **4.30 Final Score** (S) **5.20 Who Dares Wins** (S) **6.05 BBC News** (S) **6.15 BBC Regional News; Weather** (S) **6.25 Pointless Celebrities** (S)

7 **7.15 Doctor Who** The Tardis crew battles an evil force on board a space station. (S)

8 **8.00 Eurovision Song Contest 2017** Graham Norton takes to the commentary box to cover all the action from tonight's Grand Final. (S)

9

10

11 **11.25 BBC News; Weather;** (S) National Lottery Update (S) **11.45 FILM Fallen (1998) (15)** Supernatural thriller, starring Denzel Washington. (S)

AFTER 12 **1.45 Weather for the Week Ahead** (S) **1.50** BBC News (S)

BBC2

Dad's Army, 8pm

6.40 FILM God's Little Acre (1958) (PG) (S) **8.25 Talking Pictures: Hollywood Actresses** (S)(R) **9.10 FILM The Glass Bottom Boat (1966) (U)** (S) **11.00 Monty Halls' Great Hebridean Escape** (S)(R) **12.00 Great British Menu** (S)(R) **1.30 Escape to the Country** (S)(R) **2.15 Flog It!** (S) **3.00 Trust Me, I'm A Vet** (S)(R) **4.00 Gardeners' World** (S)(R) **5.00 Live Women's FA Cup Final** (S)

7 **7.30 Yorkshire Wolds Way with Paul Rose** Part one of two. Exploring one of Britain's least well-known walking trails. (S)

8 **8.00 Dad's Army** (S)(R) **8.30 FILM Woman in Gold (2015) (12)** Premiere. Fact-based drama, with Helen Mirren and Ryan Reynolds. (S)

9

10 **10.10 Match of the Day** Gary Lineker presents highlights from the Premier League, including Manchester City v Leicester City at the Emirates Stadium. (S)

11 **11.25 Versailles** King Louis XIV makes plans to send an army into the Netherlands; (S)(R) Inside Versailles. (S)(R)

AFTER 12 **12.25 FILM Therese Desqueyroux (2012) (12)** Drama, starring Audrey Tautou. **2.10** This Is BBC Two (S)

ITV

The Keith and Paddy Picture Show, 9.15pm

8.30 Weekend (S) **9.25 The Home Game** (S)(R) **10.20 Judge Rinder** (S)(R) **11.20 Tipping Point** (S)(R) **12.20 ITV News;** Weather (S) **12.30 Bigheads** (S)(R) **1.30 FILM The Man in the Iron Mask (1998) (12)** (S) **4.00 Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs** (S)(R) **4.30 Catchphrase** (S)(R) **5.15 Britain's Got More Talent** (S)(R) **6.15 ITV Regional News;** Weather (S) **6.25 ITV News** (S) **6.45 Take Me Out** (S)

7

8 **8.00 Britain's Got Talent** Ant and Dec host the fifth round of auditions, as more hopeful stars take to the stage in a bid to impress the judges. (S)

9 **9.15 The Keith and Paddy Picture Show** (S) **9.45 FILM The Mask (1994) (PG)** Comic-book comedy, starring Jim Carrey and Cameron Diaz. (S)

10 **10.45 ITV News;** Weather (S)

11 **11.00 FILM The Mask (1994) (PG)** Concluded. (S)

AFTER 12 **12.00 Jackpot247 3.00** Who's Doing the Dishes? (S)(R) **3.50 ITV** Nightscreen

Channel 4

The Restoration Man, 7pm

7.10 The King of Queens (S)(R) **7.35 Everybody Loves Raymond** (S)(R) **8.25 Frasier** (S)(R) **9.25 The Big Bang Theory** (S)(R) **10.25 The Simpsons** (S)(R) **11.55 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA** (S)(R) **12.50 Come Dine with Me** (S) **2.55 A Place in the Sun: Summer Sun** (S)(R) **3.55 Big House, Little House** (S) **5.00 Channel 4 News** (S) **5.30 Formula 1: Spanish Grand Prix Qualifying Highlights** (S)

7 **7.00 The Restoration Man** George Clarke returns to Harrogate, North Yorkshire, to catch up with Mark Hinchliffe and Laura Ruston. (S)

8 **8.00 Walks with My Dog** New series. Famous people explore the British outdoors while taking their four-legged friends for a stroll. Previously seen on More4. (S)

9 **9.00 FILM 12 Years a Slave (2013) (15)** Oscar-winning fact-based period drama, with Chiwetel Ejiofor and Michael Fassbender. (S)

10

11 **11.35 FILM AVP: Alien vs Predator (2004) (15)** Sci-fi thriller, starring Sanaa Lathan and Lance Henriksen. (S)

AFTER 12 **1.20 Hollyoaks** (S)(R) **3.30** Location, Location, Location (S)(R) **4.25** Building the Dream (S) **5.20** Fifteen to One (S)(R)

Channel 5

NCIS, 8pm

6.00 Milkshake! 9.55 The Fairly OddParents (S)(R) **10.30 Access** (S)(R **10.35 The Gadget Show** (S)(R) **11.30 Police Interceptors** (S)(R) **2.30 FIA Formula E Live: Monaco** The fifth round of the season. (S) **4.15 The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door** (S)(R) **6.10 5 News Weekend** (S) **6.15 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away** Two agents face death threats from a debtor's father. (S)(R)

7 **7.05 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away** The officers chase up nearly £50,000 in unpaid rent. (S)

8 **8.00 NCIS** Naval crime drama, starring Michael Weatherly. (S)

9 **9.00 NCIS** Gibbs and TC Fornell hunt two British fugitives. (S) **9.55 NCIS: Los Angeles** Part two of two. Conclusion of the crossove episode with Hawaii Five-0. (S)

10 **10.50 Moors Murders: Britain's Worst Crime** The crimes of Myra Hindley and Ian Brady. (S)(R)

11 **11.45 Criminals: Caught on Camera** The use of CCTV to fight crime. (S)(R)

AFTER 12 **12.15 SuperCasino 3.10** Top 20 Funniest (S) **4.00** Criminals: Caught or Camera (S)(R) **4.50** House Doctor (S)(R) **5.15** Wildlife SOS (S)(R) **5.40** Angels of Jarm (S)(R) **5.50** Roary the Racing Car (S)(R)

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DIGITAL

ITV2 SKY: 118 FV: 6

6.00 Kelly Clarkson: The Hot Desk **6.10** Emmerdale **8.30** Coronation Street **11.00** Britain's Got Talent **12.15** Britain's Got More Talent **1.15** Take Me Out **2.30** Take Me Out – The Gossip **3.30** You've Been Framed! Gold and Famous **4.30** FILM: The Smurfs (2011) (U) Fantasy comedy, starring Neil Patrick Harris. **5.30** FYI Daily **5.35** FILM: The Smurfs (2011) (U) Concluded. **6.35** FILM: Mr Bean's Holiday (2007) (PG) Comedy, starring Rowan Atkinson. **7.35** FYI Daily **7.40** FILM: Mr Bean's Holiday (2007) (PG) Concluded. **8.20** Scorpion **9.15** Britain's Got More Talent **10.20** Celebrity Juice **11.20** Family Guy **12.45** FILM: American Pie (1999) (15) Coming-of-age comedy, with Jason Biggs. **1.45** FYI Daily **1.50** FILM: American Pie (1999) (15) Concluded. **2.35** Nick Jonas: The Hot Desk **2.45** Teleshopping **5.45** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3 SKY: 119 FV: 10

6.00 In Loving Memory **6.25** Murder, She Wrote **9.15** The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes **10.20** FILM: Columbo: Suitable for Framing (1971) (PG) Detective drama, starring Peter Falk. **12.05** FILM: Carry On at Your Convenience (1971) (PG) Comedy, starring Sid James. **1.10** FYI Daily **1.15** FILM: Carry On at Your Convenience (1971) (PG) Concluded. **2.00** Lewis **5.55** Rosemary & Thyme **7.00** Midsomer Murders **9.00** Foyle's War **11.00** Law & Order: UK **2.00** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

BBC4 SKY: 116 FV: 9

7.00 Nature's Great Events **8.00** Masters of the Pacific Coast: The Tribes of The American Northwest **9.00** Hinterland **10.25** Top of the Pops: 1983 **11.35** The Kate Bush Story: Running Up That Hill **12.35** Kate Bush at the BBC **1.35** Singer-Songwriters at the BBC **2.35** The Kate Bush Story: Running Up That Hill **3.40** Close

E4 SKY: 136 FV: 28

6.00 Rude(ish) Tube **6.30** How I Met Your Mother **7.20** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **8.20** The Goldbergs **8.50** Made in Chelsea **10.00** Melissa & Joey **12.30** The Goldbergs **3.30** FILM: The Spy Next Door (2010) (PG) Comedy, starring Jackie Chan. **5.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** FILM: Van Helsing (2004) (12) Gothic action adventure, starring Hugh Jackman. **11.40** Gogglebox **1.50** Rude Tube **2.45** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **3.30** Black-ish **3.50** New Girl **4.35** Charmed

MORE4 SKY: 138 FV: 14

8.55 Come Dine with Me **11.35** Location, Location, Location **12.35** Coast vs Country **1.40** Four in a Bed **4.20** Come Dine with Me **6.55** Nazi Megastructures **8.00** Hitler: The Rise and Fall **9.00** Hitler's Hidden Drug Habit: Secret History **10.05** The World's Most Extreme **11.10** 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown **12.15** Father Ted **1.15** Nazi Megastructures **2.20** Hitler: The Rise and Fall **3.20** 8 Out of 10 Cats **4.00** Close

FILM4 SKY: 315 FV: 15

11.00 A Thousand Words (2012) (12) Comedy, starring Eddie Murphy. **1.00** Field of Dreams (1989) (PG) Baseball fantasy, with Kevin Costner and Ray Liotta. **3.05** Gulliver's Travels (2010) (PG) Fantasy comedy, starring Jack Black. **4.40** The Three Musketeers (1973) (PG) Swashbuckling adventure, starring Michael York. **6.50** I, Robot (2004) (12) Sci-fi thriller, starring Will Smith. **9.00** Salt (2010) (12) Action thriller, starring Angelina Jolie. **11.00** The Haunting (1999) (12) Horror remake, starring Liam Neeson. **1.10** Fright Night (1985) (18) Comedy horror, starring Roddy McDowall. **3.25** Close

DAVE SKY: 111 FV: 12

6.00 Home Shopping **7.10** Lizard Lick Towing **8.00** Top Gear **9.00** Dara O Briain's Go 8 Bit **10.00** Top Gear **12.00** Traffic Cops **1.00** Sin City Motors **3.00** Cops UK: Bodycam Squad **5.00** Top Gear **7.00** Red Dwarf **9.00** FILM: Training Day (2001) (18) Thriller, starring Denzel Washington. **11.20** Dave Gorman: Modern Life Is Goodish **12.20** QI XL **1.20** Red Dwarf **3.10** QI XL **4.00** Home Shopping

DRAMA SKY: 158 FV: 20

7.10 Secret Army **11.00** Sharpe **1.00** Secret Army **5.00** Open All Hours **7.00** Hetty Wainthropp Investigates **8.00** Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries **9.00** Taggart **11.00** Waking the Dead **1.10** Hetty Wainthropp Investigates **2.15** Sharpe **4.00** Home Shopping

SKY1 SKY: 106

6.00 Ashley Banjo's Secret Street Crew **7.45** Duck Quacks Don't Echo **8.15** Game Changers **8.45** The Fantasy Football Club **9.45** Soccer AM **11.30** Live Premier League. Pre-match build-up to Manchester City v Leicester City. **12.30** The F1 Show **1.00** Wild Things **2.00** Modern Family **3.00** Gillette Soccer Saturday **5.15** Supergirl **6.10** The Flash **7.05** MacGyver **8.00** Inside the Freemasons **9.00** Micky Flanagan Thinking Aloud **10.00** Jamestown **11.00** NCIS: Los Angeles **12.00** A League of Their Own **2.00** Legends **3.00** DC's Legends of Tomorrow **4.00** Stop, Search, Seize **5.00** Ninja Warrior **5.30** Zoo Tales

SKY ATLANTIC SKY: 108

6.00 Richard E Grant's Hotel Secrets **7.00** Fish Town **9.00** The West Wing **2.00** Cold Case **4.00** House **6.00** Open Your Eyes **7.00** 24 Hours in Trump's America **8.0** Blue Bloods **9.00** Game of Thrones **10.00** Seven Days in Hell **11.00** Last Week Tonight with John Oliver **11.3** Real Time with Bill Maher **12.45** The Circus: Inside The Biggest Story On Earth **1.20** The Borgias **2.20** Girls **4.05** Urban Secrets

W SKY: 109

6.00 Countryside 999 **7.00** Extreme Makeover: Home Edition **8.00** The Bill **1.00** EastEnders **3.30** Tom Kerridge's Best Ever Dishes **4.00** Supernanny US **6.00** My Family **8.00** John Bishop: In Conversation with Meera Syal **9.00** FILM: Final Destination 5 (2011) (15) Premiere. Horror sequel, starring Nicholas D'Agosto. **11.00** Grimm **12.00** Inside the Ambulance **1.00** Grim **1.50** Code Black **3.00** Home Shopping

GOLD SKY: 110

7.00 The Piglet Files **7.25** The Two Ronnies **9.00** Only Fools and Horses **10.20** Last of the Summer Wine **11.40** Only Fools and Horses **9.00** The Royle Family **11.00** Black Books **12.05** Dylan Moran: What It Is **1.5** Human Remains **2.30** The Armando Iannucci Shows **2.55** Monty Python: The Meaning of Live **4.00** Home Shopping

SKY SPORTS 1 SKY: 401

6.00 Football League Gold **6.45** Premier League Highlights **7.45** Game Changers **8.15** Premier League Preview **8.45** The Fantasy Football Club **9.45** Soccer A **11.30** Live Premier League. Pre-match build-up to Manchester City v Leicester City. **12.30** Live Premier League. Manchester City v Leicester City (kick-off 12.30pm). **3.00** Live ATP Masters Tennis. The Mutua Madrid Open. **5.00** Great Sporting Moments **5.15** Live Premier League. Stoke City v Arsenal (kick-off 5.30pm **8.00** Gary Neville: The Pundit **8.30** Nissan Game of th Day **10.30** Nissan Match Choice **11.30** Premier Leagu Highlights

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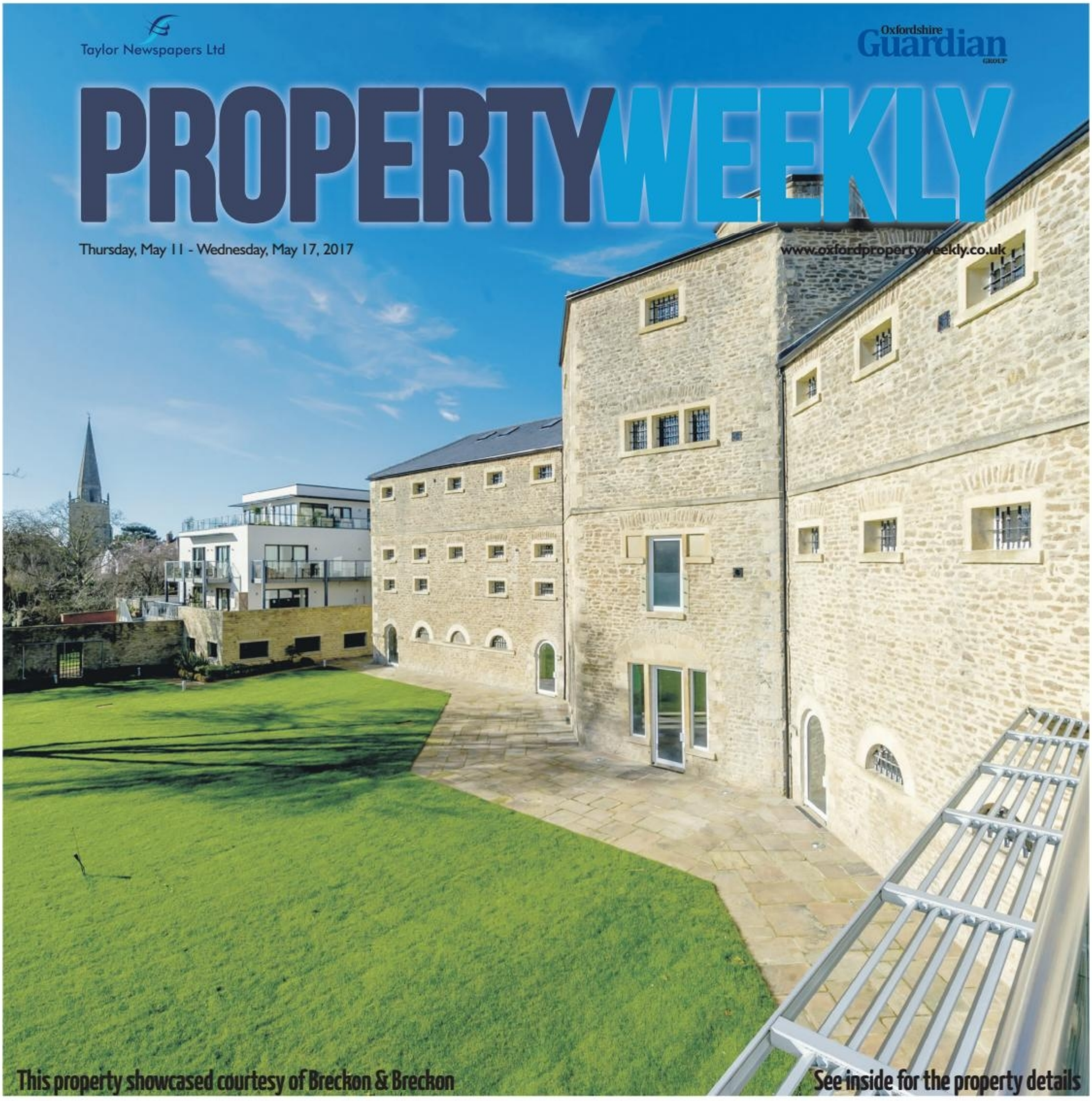

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See inside for the property details

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6.5 million people use Oxford train station a year - How does that affect the Oxford property market?

Bill Cooper, co-author of The Oxford Property Blog and managing director of Martin and Co, Oxford

It might surprise you that it isn't always the nicest, most picturesque villages around Oxford or the most desirable Oxford streets where properties sell or let the quickest. Quite often, it's the ones that offer the best transport links. There is a reason why one of the most popular property programmes on television is called Location, Location, Location!

As an agent in Oxford, I am frequently confronted with queries about the Oxford property market, and most days I am asked, "What is the best part of Oxford to live in these days?". Now, the answer can be different for each person – a lot depends on individual factors, for example the age of their family, their age, or schooling requirements and interests. Nonetheless, one of the principal necessities for most tenants and buyers is ease of access to transport links, including public transport – of which the railways are very important.

Official figures recently released show that, in total, 9,017 people jump on a train every day from Oxford train station. Of those, 2,811 are season ticket holders. That's a lot of money being spent when a standard class season ticket to London is £5,724 a year.

The bottom line is that property values in central Oxford would be much lower, by at least three to four per cent, if it wasn't for the proximity of the railway station and the people it allows access north and south of the city.

Rail is becoming increasingly important, as the costs associated with car travel continue to rise and as the roads are becoming more and more congested. This has resulted in a huge surge in demand for rail travel.

Overall usage of the station at Oxford has increased over the last 20 years. In 1997, a total of 3,064,352 people went through the barriers or connected with another train at the station in that 12-month period. However, in 2016, that figure had risen to 6,564,678 people using the station (that's 18,035 people a day).

Hence the huge investment in capacity at Oxford Parkway station where parallel investment in bus routes to/from Oxford has driven house prices in and around Kidlington, meaning that house price growth continues to track above the average for Oxford.

A property's location relative to the train station has an important effect on its value and saleability in Oxford. It is also significant for tenants – allowing car-free living to be realistic in a city that wishes to limit car usage.

One of the first things house buyers and tenants do when surfing the web for somewhere to live is find out the proximity of a property to the train station. That is why Rightmove displays the distance to the railway station alongside every property on their website – they know it is in the top five criteria applied by buyers and tenants alike.

To illustrate this, recently a couple came to me looking for a property five minutes' walk from Oxford station and five minutes' walk to the central shops, restaurants and bars. They wanted two bedrooms, one bathroom and wanted to keep the monthly rent to around £1,000. In the event, they achieved their perfect location, but had to raise their budget by 20 per cent, reflecting the premium that proximity to the stations carries. They are now living just off St Thomas Street, just a few hundred yards from the Central station.

For more thoughts on the Oxford property market – visit the Oxford Property Blog: **OxfordPropertyBlog.co.uk.**

Two-bed apartment in central Abingdon

An outstanding apartment in this luxurious central Abingdon development with views of St Helen's Church, St Nicholas Church and Twickenham House is available to let.

There are two double bedrooms - one with an en-suite shower room - an open plan living area/kitchen with all Bosch appliances, and mezzanine level. It has good access to A34 south for Milton Park, the M4 and Newbury, as well as north for Oxford and the M40. It is offered unfurnished and is available from July 7. EPC rating: C

To arrange a viewing or for further details, contact Breckon & Breckon Lettings Abingdon on 01235 554040, or visit breckon.co.uk.

Miller Homes plans new development of three and four-bed houses in Bloxham

Miller Homes Southern has announced it will be building 85 new homes in Bloxham, Oxfordshire, this summer.

The Weavers Fields development will offer potential purchasers the choice of three and four bedroom executive homes.

Each of the houses will feature modern interior design and spacious, practical layouts, built with family living in mind in a much sought-after area for residential property.

Located on the edge of the stunning Cotswolds countryside, Bloxham has fast and convenient transport links to the major towns and cities nearby, with Oxford just 45 minutes in the car, and London a 50-minute train journey from nearby Banbury station.

The charming village features a friendly, bustling high street and excellent amenities, including traditional pubs, schools, a GP and dental practice, and a post office.

Tracey Lee, regional operations director for Miller Homes Southern, expects the properties to be in high demand.

She said: "The friendly area of Bloxham offers a desirable community in which to put down roots.

"Spacious family homes in this area do not come on the market very often, so we are sure that there will be a keen level of interest in Weavers Fields."

Following the recent launch of the Woodlands community on Tadmarton Road which features a selection of two, three and four-bedroom homes, this development will be the housebuilder's second site in Bloxham.

Incentives such as Miller Homes Part Exchange, and the government-backed Help to Buy scheme, will make the purchase of one of the properties an even more attractive prospect.

To find out more and register your interest in Weavers Fields and all other developments across the region, visit millerhomes.co.uk.

PROPERTY WEEKLY

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Artist's impression

King's Court, Carterton
Homes from £185,000

Brand-new Development of Luxurious Cotswolds Homes

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King's Court is a brand-new development of 28 luxurious park homes located a short walk from Carterton town centre. Despite its tranquil setting, the park is within easy reach of the abundance of shops and amenities the town has to offer.

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KINGS COPSE, GARSINGTON £119,950
(4 miles east Oxford centre)

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HORSPATH PARK, HORSPATH £99,950
(5 miles east Oxford centre)

A 1987 Omar Princess Special 26' x 19' twin unit pleasantly located on established private park. Inner hall, 19' lounge/diner L-shaped, kitchen, double bedroom, bathroom with coloured suite, LPG gas radiator central heating, recently installed UPVC double glazed replacement windows and doors by Prestige Developments, Decra style roof, on-site car parking space, gardens, additional communal car parking nearby

WICK FARM, HEADINGTON £95,000
(3 miles Oxford, 1 mile Headington)

A much improved and well-presented 1989 Omar Waverney Executive 44' x 12' single unit pleasantly located on corner plot with open views to front on this established private park. Hall, lounge, kitchen, dining area, 2 bedrooms, bathroom/shower room, solid fuel central heating, UPVC double glazing, good decorative order throughout, textured external walls, brick built skirt, Decra style roof, gardens with car parking space adjoining

ST MARY'S COURT, BAMPTON £185,000
(4 miles Witney, 12 miles Oxford)

A superbly presented 2011 Tingdene Muslo Lodge 42' x 20' twin unit pleasantly situated on this established and popular private park. Porch hall, superb L-shaped lounge/diner, study, fitted kitchen, 2 bedrooms (main bedroom with dressing room adjoining), luxury bathroom/shower room, LPG gas radiator central heating, wood-effect flooring throughout, UPVC double glazed Georgian style windows and doors, textured external walls, Decra style roof, brick built skirt and steps, gravelled driveway and gravelled car parking space, low maintenanc gardens

TUDOR COURT, BOTLEY £127,500
(3 miles west Oxford)

A well presented 1987 Tingdene Villa 36' x 20' twin unit on sought after private park. Hall, lounge, kitchen, 2 bedrooms, bedroom 3/study, bathroom with coloured suite, mains gas radiator central heating, Decra style roof, UPVC double glazed replacement windows, on-site car parking space, gardens

WICK FARM, HEADINGTON £89,950
(3 miles north Oxford)

a 1992 Tingdene 28' x 20' twin unit pleasantly situated on corner plot overlooking fields on this establsihed private park. Inner hall, lounge/diner, kitchen, bedroom, bedroom 2/study, bathroom with coloured suite, LPG gas radiator central heating, UPVC double glazed windows, textured walls, brick built skirt, good sized gardens with views over fields, communal car parking nearby

DUVALL PARK, UPPER HEYFORD £200,000-£300,000+

N.B: PHOTOS EXAMPLE OF STYLE AVAILABLE NOT ACTUAL HOME! A select NEW development of Park Homes on the outskirts of this established park. Selection of BRAND NEW Stately 40' x 20' twin units up to 46' x 20' twin units with prices ranging from £200,000 to £300,000. All homes luxuriously appointed with UPVC double glazing, LPG gas radiator central heating, Decra style roof, gardens, on-site car parking space, high specification throughout with integrated white goods and quality furnishings.

THE WILLOWS, GROVE £127,500
(2 miles Wantage, 12 miles Oxford)

A mid 1990s Stately 40' x 20' twin unit set in good sized gardens with open views to rear on established private park. Porch, hall, 20' lounge, dining room, kitchen, 2 good bedrooms, bathroom, UPVC double glazing, mains gas radiator central heating via modern combi boiler, Decra style roof, brick built skirt, gardens with open views, communal car parking nearby

SANDFORD ON THAMES £225,000
(4 miles east Oxford city centre)

A superbly presented Country Homes Reprise 46' x 20' twin unit, first occupied early 2016, enjoying pleasant open aspect to rear. Porch, hall, study, cloakroom, 19'6 lounge, dining room, kitchen, utility room, 2 good bedrooms (main bedroom with en-suite shower room and walk-in wardrobe), family bathroom, UPVC double glazed windows and doors, LPG gas radiator central heating via combi boiler, Decra style roof, textured walls, brick built skirt and steps, gardens with on-site car parking space to front and open views over fields to rear

SANDFORD ON THAMES £39,950
(3 miles Oxford centre)

A 1970s Wonderland 36' x 10' single unit on corner plot in need of some updating. Hall, lounge/diner, kitchen, 2 bedrooms, bathroom, LPG gas central heating, some UPVC double glazing, textured walls, re-constituted stone skirt, low maintenance gardens, on-site car parking space

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Abingdon £450,000
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Abingdon £449,950
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Central Abingdon £499,950
Sunny aspect character cottage in secluded courtyard location just 0.6 miles from central Abingdon. EPC Rating E.

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Abingdon £335,000
Superb three bedroom semi-detached house within 1.4 miles of Abingdon town centre. EPC Rating C.

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A beautifully presented 4/5 bedroom family home with an impressive 156' garden set in a village location. EPC Rating D.

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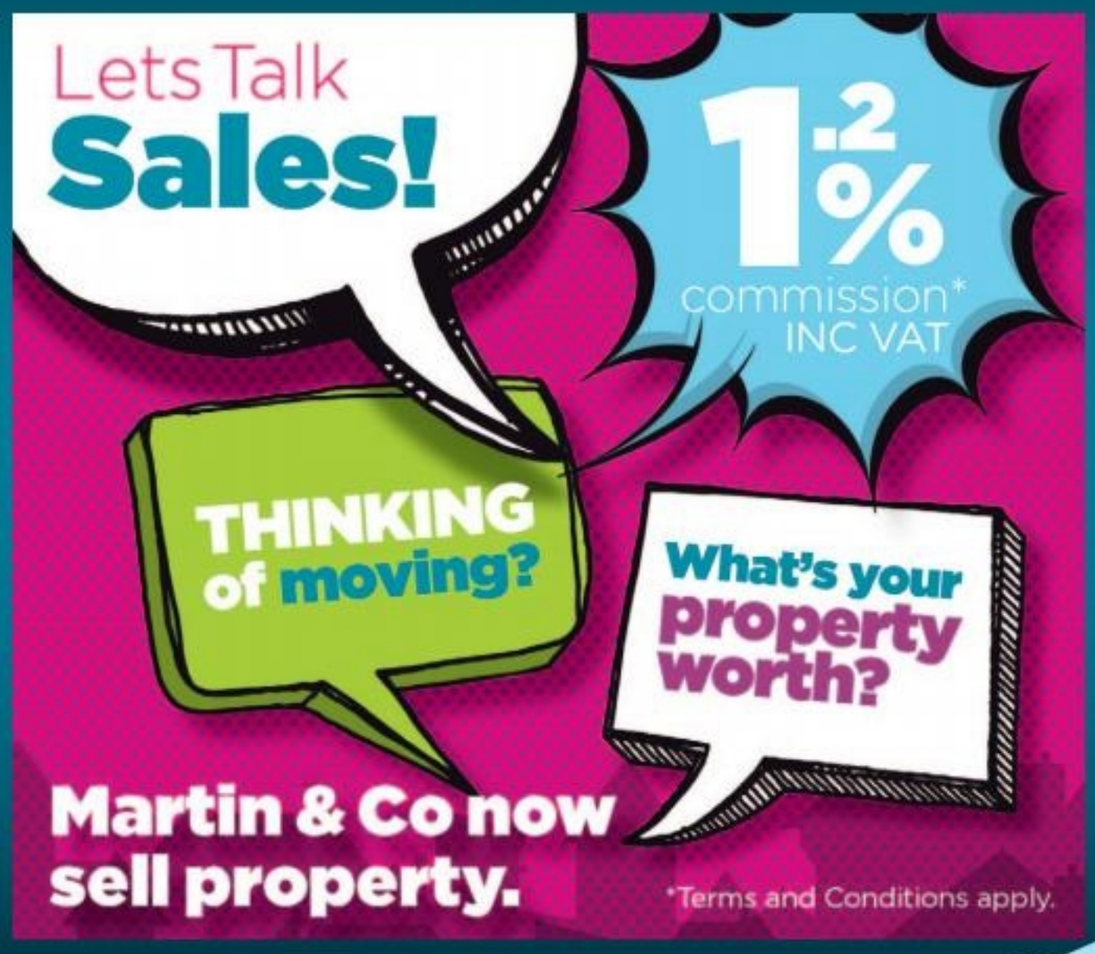

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Abingdon £250,000

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North Abingdon

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£335,000

North Abingdon

A nicely presented three bedroom, family home in this popular area, within reach of transport links and local amenities. Comprising: an entrance hall with cloakroom, sitting room with box bay window, a spacious kitchen opening to the family/dining room, with doors into the conservatory. Three well proportioned bedrooms and the house bathroom on the first floor. A block paved drive, part converted garage and an enclosed rear garden with mature planting. EPC - D

Guide Price £375,000

Dry Sandford £565,000

Offering a pleasant open aspect, a four bedroomed family home boasting generous and flexible accommodation over two floors. Ample parking and a lovely garden with open views. EPC - E

Abingdon on Thames £215,000

A nicely presented one bedroom apartment, situated a short walk from the town centre. The apartment would be an excellent first time purchase or buy to let investment. EPC - C

North Abingdon £435,000

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Sunday May 14th

DAYTIME

BBC1

7.40 Match of the Day (S)(R) **9.00 The Andrew Marr Show** (S) **10.00 The Big Questions** (S) **11.00 Sunday Politics** (S) **12.15 Bargain Hunt** (S)(R) **1.00 BBC News** (S) **1.15 Homes Under the Hammer** (S)(R) **2.15 Money for Nothing** (S)(R) **3.00 Flog It!** (S)(R) **4.00 Points of View** (S) **4.15 Escape to the Country** (S)(R) **5.15 Songs of Praise** (S) **5.50 Pointless Celebrities** (S)(R) **6.35 BBC News** (S) **6.50 BBC Regional News** (S)

7

7.00 Countryfile Matt Baker reports on a plan to preserve the Suffolk Broads with a vast land purchase. (S)

8

8.00 British Academy Television Awards 2017 Sue Perkins hosts the awards ceremony from London's Royal Festival Hall. (S)

9

10

10.00 BBC News (S)
10.20 BBC Regional News; Weather (S)
10.30 Match of the Day 2 Mark Chapman reviews the latest Premier League action. (S)

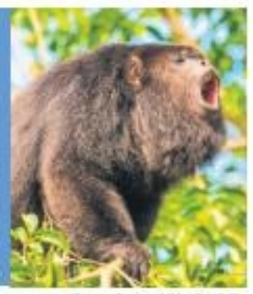
11

11.45 Murder in Successville Undercover detective Noel Edmonds is found dead. (S)

AFTER 12

12.15 FILM Forget Me Not (2011) (15) Romantic drama, with Tobias Menzies and Genevieve O'Reilly. (S)
1.45 Weather for the Week Ahead (S)
1.50 BBC News (S)

BBC2



8.15 The Beechgrove Garden (S) **8.45 Countryfile** (S)(R) **9.45 Saturday Kitchen Best Bites** (S) **11.15 Great British Menu** (S)(R) **12.15 MOTD2 Extra** (S) **1.00 Triathlon World Series: Yokohama Highlights** (S) **2.30 Live Challenge Cup Rugby League** (S) **5.00 Athletics: Diamond League Shanghai Highlights** (S) **6.00 Inside the Factory: How Our Favourite Foods Are Made** (S)(R)

7.00 Amazing Hotels: Life Beyond the Lobby Giles and Monica join the staff working in some of the most unusual hotels around the world. (S)(R)

8.00 Mexico: Earth's Festival of Life Exploring the forests of the Yucatan Peninsula. (S)

9.00 Dara and Ed's Road to Mandalay Dara O Briain and Ed Byrne reach Thailand, where they find out about locals' reaction to the tourist explosion in Bangkok and enjoy a massage. (S)

10.00 FILM Half of a Yellow Sun (2013) (15) Drama, starring Thandie Newton, Anika Noni Rose and Chiwetel Ejiofor. (S)

11.45 FILM Memento (2000) (15) Christopher Nolan's thriller, with Guy Pearce and Carrie-Anne Moss. (S)

1.45 Sign Zone: Question Time (S)(R) **2.45** Holby City (S)(R) **3.45** This Is BBC Two (S)

ITV

6.00 CITV 8.25 ITV News (S) **8.30 Weekend** (S) **9.25 Countrywise** (S)(R) **10.00 Peston on Sunday** (S) **11.00 Judge Rinder** (S)(R) **11.55 ITV News;** Weather (S) **12.10 Tipping Point** (S)(R) **1.10 Who's Doing the Dishes?** (S)(R) **2.05 The Chase** (S)(R) **3.05 Britain's Got Talent** (S)(R) **4.20 FILM Live and Let Die (1973) (PG)** (S) **6.35 ITV Regional News;** Weather (S) **6.45 ITV News** (S)

7.00 Bigheads Comedy game show in which contestants undertake physical challenges while wearing giant model heads of celebrities. (S)

8.00 The Durrells Aunt Hermione returns to Corfu, despite the family's efforts to keep her away, and she is accompanied by a medium (Una Stubbs). (S)

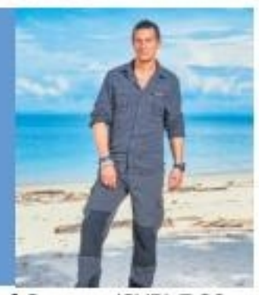
9.00 Grantchester A factory worker dies in what appears to be a drunken accident, but Geordie suspects foul play. However, secret forces are determined to shut down his investigation. (S)

10.00 ITV News; Weather (S)
10.20 Peston on Sunday Political magazine, presented by Robert Peston. Allegra Stratton presents a guide to the latest issues on social media. (S)(R)

11.20 Lethal Weapon Murtaugh and Riggs suspect abuse of power in the LA Sheriff's department. (S)(R)

12.10 Jackpot247 3.00 Motorsport UK (S) **3.50 ITV** Nightscreen **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show (S)(R)

Channel 4



6.15 The King of Queens (S)(R) **7.30 Everybody Loves Raymond** (S)(R) **8.25 Frasier** (S)(R) **9.30 Sunday Brunch** (S) **12.30 Eat the Week** (S) **1.30 FILM Dr Dolittle (1998) (PG)** (S) **3.10 Location, Location, Location** (S)(R) **4.15 A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun** (S)(R) **5.15 Escape to Costa Rica** (S) **6.15 Channel 4 News** (S) **6.45 Formula 1: Spanish Grand Prix Highlights** (S)

9.00 The Island with Bear Grylls The castaways enter their final days on the island. Aran and Jacqui stumble across a caiman crocodile. (S)

10.00 Surviving The Island with Bear Grylls The castaways look back on the past five weeks on the island, and Bear reveals which of the two groups did the best job of surviving. (S)

11.00 FILM Prisoners (2013) (15) Thriller, starring Hugh Jackman, Jake Gyllenhaal and Paul Dano. (S)

1.50 Millionaires' Mansions: Designing Britain's Most Exclusive Homes (S)(R) **2.45** Location, Location, Location (S)(R) **3.40** Building the Dream (S) **4.35** KOTV Boxing Weekly (S) **5.05** Gillette World Sport (S) **5.30** Shipping Wars UK (S)(R)

Channel 5

6.00 Milkshake! 9.55 The Fairly OddParents (S)(R) **10.30 Access** (S)(R **10.40 Criminals: Caught on Camera** (S)(R) **11.10 FILM Michael (1996) (PG)** (S) **1.10 On Benefits: Breadline Brits** (S)(R) **2.10 On Benefits: The Compensation King** (S)(R) **3.10 On Benefits: Famous & Claiming** (S)(R) **4.10 On Benefits: 30 Stone and Claiming** (S)(R) **5.10 Britain's Best Loved Double Acts** (S)(R)

8.00 Toddlers Make You Laugh Out Loud Internet videos featuring youngsters doing bizarre and humorous things. (S)(R)
8.55 5 News Weekend (S)

9.00 When Game Shows Go Horribly Wrong Dale Winton narrates a compilation of disastrous game show moments. (S)

DIGITAL

ITV2 SKY: 118 FV: 6

6.00 Planet's Funniest Animals **6.20** Emmerdale **8.50** Coronation Street **11.20** Take Me Out **12.35** FILM: The Smurfs (2011) (U) **1.35** FYI Daily **1.40** FILM: The Smurfs (2011) (U) **2.40** FILM: A Cinderella Story (2004) (PG) Romantic comedy, starring Hilary Duff and Chad Michael Murray. **3.40** FYI Daily **3.45** FILM: A Cinderella Story (2004) (PG) Concluded. **4.35** Britain's Got Talent **5.50** Britain's Got More Talent **6.50** FILM: Step Up (2006) (PG) Romantic dance drama, with Channing Tatum and Jenna Dewan. **7.50** FYI Daily **7.55** FILM: Step Up (2006) (PG) Concluded. **9.00** Take Me Out – The Gossip **10.00** Family Guy **11.30** American Dad! **12.25** The Cleveland Show **1.20** The Vampire Diaries **2.10** Zara Larsson: The Hot Desk **2.20** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3 SKY: 119 FV: 10

6.00 In Loving Memory **6.25** FILM: Carry On at Your Convenience (1971) (PG) **7.25** FYI Daily **7.30** FILM: Carry On at Your Convenience (1971) (PG) **8.05** Heartbeat **10.05** Murder, She Wrote **12.05** FILM: Columbo: Double Shock (1973) (U) **1.40** A Touch of Frost **3.55** Foyle's War **5.55** Midsomer Murders **8.00** Royal Stories **9.00** The Queen's Garden **10.00** Law & Order: UK **12.05** Wire in the Blood **2.10** Agatha Christie's Marple **3.50** May the Best House Win **5.30** ITV3 Nightscreen

BBC4 SKY: 116 FV: 9

7.00 The Birth of British Music **8.00** The Secret Life of the Motorway **9.00** OJ: Made in America – Storyville **10.30** Storyville: Circus Elephant Rampage **11.25** Timeshift: How Britain Won the Space Race – The Story of Bernard Lovell and Jodrell Bank **12.25** Horizon: The Creative Brain – How Insight Works **1.25** Nature's Great Events **2.25** Michael Palin's Quest for Artemisia **3.25** Close

E4 SKY: 136 FV: 28

6.00 Rude(ish) Tube **6.25** Couples Come Dine with Me **8.20** Hollyoaks **11.00** Made in Chelsea **12.00** The Goldbergs **1.30** Baby Daddy **2.00** Kevin Can Wait **2.30** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **3.00** New Girl **3.30** FILM: Thunderbirds (2004) (PG) Sci-fi adventure, starring Bill Paxton. **5.20** Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **5.35** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **10.00** Tattoo Fixers **12.05** Rude Tube **1.05** E4's Tattoo Artist of the Year: The Finale **2.10** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **2.55** Black-ish **3.15** Hollyoaks

MORE4 SKY: 138 FV: 14

8.55 Location, Location, Location **9.55** Coast vs Country **11.00** Selling Houses with Amanda Lamb **12.00** Grand Designs New Zealand **1.05** Come Dine with Me **3.40** Four in a Bed **6.25** Come Dine with Me **9.00** Father Ted **10.00** Sarah Millican: Outsider **11.10** 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown **12.10** 24 Hours in A&E **1.15** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **2.15** 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown **3.15** 8 Out of 10 Cats **3.55** Close

FILM4 SKY: 315 FV: 15

11.00 Rugrats Go Wild (2003) (U) Children's animated adventure, with the voice of Nancy Cartwright. **1.00** Spy Kids 4: All the Time in the World (2011) (PG) **2.45** Carry On Teacher (1959) (U) Comedy, starring Ted Ray. **4.30** St Trinian's 2: The Legend of Fritton's Gold (2009) (PG) Comedy sequel, starring Rupert Everett. **6.35** Star Trek (2009) (12) Sci-fi adventure, starring Chris Pine and Zachary Quinto. **9.00** Unknown (2011) (12) Thriller, starring Liam Neeson. **11.15** Shutter Island (2010) (15) Mystery thriller, starring Leonardo DiCaprio. **1.55** Eyes Without a Face (1960) (15) **3.50** Close

DAVE SKY: 111 FV: 12

6.00 Home Shopping **7.10** Lizard Lick Towing **8.00** Cops UK: Bodycam Squad **9.00** Top Gear **10.00** Steve Austin's Broken Skull Challenge **11.00** Traffic Cops **12.00** Motorway Cops **1.00** Lizard Lick Towing **2.00** Deadly 60 **4.00** Top Gear **5.00** Top Gear Winter Olympics Special **6.00** Top Gear: Polar Challenge **7.00** Motorway Cops **8.00** Traffic Cops **9.00** QI XL **10.00** Taskmaster **11.00** Live at the Apollo **12.00** Room 101 **1.20** QI XL **2.20** Taskmaster **3.10** QI XL **4.00** Home Shopping

DRAMA SKY: 158 FV: 20

7.10 The Bill **11.00** Bleak House **3.40** Catherine Cookson's A Dinner of Herbs **6.40** Call the Midwife **8.00** The Red Tent **9.00** Silent Witness **11.30** Spooks **2.00** Call the Midwife **3.10** The Red Tent **4.00** Home Shopping

SKY1 SKY: 106

6.00 Hour of Power **7.00** David Attenborough's Natural History Museum Alive **8.30** Futurama **9.00** Supergirl **10.00** The Flash **11.00** WWE Raw Hits **12.00** Futurama **2.00** Modern Family **6.30** The Simpsons **8.00** Wild Things **9.00** Hawaii Five-0 **10.00** NCIS: Los Angeles **11.00** MacGyver **12.00** The Blacklist: Redemption **1.00** Arrow **2.00** Legends **3.00** Brit Cops: War on Crime **4.00** Stop, Search, Seize **5.00** Zoo Tales

SKY ATLANTIC SKY: 108

6.00 Fish Town **8.00** The West Wing **1.00** House **3.00** Blue Bloods **9.00** Warning: This Drug May Kill You **10.15** Real Time with Bill Maher **11.25** Veep **12.00** The Trip to Spain **12.35** Billions **1.45** Guerrilla **2.45** Westworld **3.50** Girls **4.20** Urban Secrets

W SKY: 109

6.10 Countryside 999 **6.50** Extreme Makeover: Home Edition **7.40** Celebrity MasterChef **1.00** Doctor Who **3.00** My Family **5.00** Outnumbered **7.00** One Born Every Minute **8.00** Dr Christian Will See You Now **9.00** John Bishop: In Conversation with Meera Syal **10.00** Ordinary Lies **11.10** Louis Theroux's LA Stories **12.25** Grimm **1.20** Code Black **2.10** Ben Earl: Trick Artist **3.00** Home Shopping

GOLD SKY: 110

7.00 The Piglet Files **7.35** The Two Ronnies **8.25** Only Fools and Horses **9.00** The Royle Family **11.00** I'm Alan Partridge **12.20** The Thick of It **1.00** The League of Gentlemen **1.40** Human Remains **2.15** Monty Python: The Meaning of Live **3.05** Nighty Night **4.00** Home Shopping

SKY SPORTS 1 SKY: 401

6.00 Football League Gold **6.30** Football Gold **7.00** Premier League 100 Club **7.30** Premier League Legends **8.00** Football League Gold **8.30** Football Gold **9.00** The Sunday Supplement **10.00** Goals on Sunday **11.00** Live Nissan Super Sunday. **12.00** Live Nissan Super Sunday. **2.00** Live Nissan Super Sunday. West Ham United v Liverpool (kick-off 2.15pm). **4.00** Live Nissan Super Sunday. Tottenham Hotspur v Manchester United (kick-off 4.30pm). **8.00** Goals on Sunday **9.00** Football League Gold **9.30** Football Gold **10.00** Premier League Highlights **11.00** Goals on Sunday **12.00** Premier League Highlights **1.00** Goals on Sunday **2.00** Premier League Highlights **3.00** Premier League 100 Club **3.30** Premier League Legends **4.00** Goals on Sunday **5.00** Premier League 100 Club **5.30** Spanish Football Gold

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ENTERTAINMENT & LISTINGS

Shakespeare meets sci-fi

By Samantha McGregor

ONE of Oxfordshire's leading am dram groups are gearing up for their latest production, the hotshot jukebox musical Return to the Forbidden Planet.

Sinodun Players are performing the popular show which is loosely based on Shakespeare's The Tempest and the 1950s movie The Forbidden Planet – it's a heady mix of sci-fi and Shakespeare glued together by a backbone of rock 'n' roll music.

Return to the Forbidden Planet tells the story of fearless, steely-jawed Captain Tempest who gets caught in a meteor storm and crash-lands his spaceship on Illyria, the Forbidden Planet.

He meets mysterious scientist Dr Prospero and his winsome teenage daughter Miranda.

Both were marooned there 15 years ago due to the actions of the doctor's scheming wife Gloria.

What follows is a tall tale of revenge, intrigue, love and a brain-enhancing X-factor drug.

Throw a robot called Ariel and a tentacled monster into the mix and you have the ingredients for a fun sci-fi adventure of epic proportions.

Get ready for tunes from the 1950s and 1960s such as Great Balls of Fire, Born to be Wild, Shakin' All Over , Good Vibrations, Monster Mash, Shake Rattle 'n' Roll, Yeah Yeah, and Teenager in Love.

Musical director Sue Huntingford-Ledger heads up a six-piece band of professional and non-professional musicians who live and breathe all music genres.

One of them, guitarist Colin Green, has enjoyed a long and illustrious career in the music business, starting out in Billy Fury's backing group, he went on to play in influential Sixties' R&B band Georgie Fame and the Blue Flames.

Since then, he has composed for TV and film and worked alongside a diverse range of artistes, from Elton John, Diana Ross, Tom Jones and Shirley Bassey to Kiri te Kanawa, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Bjork.

Director Ric Harley said: "It will be a joy of an evening, brimful of songs that everyone knows or can at least hum along to and it has a great script.

"It will be the best live music in town and I can guarantee everyone will go home singing.

"This will be the last live show before the Corn Exchange's temporary closure for major work. Come and help us literally raise the roof'."

Return to the Forbidden Planet from Wednesday May 17, until Saturday May 20, at the Corn Exchange, in Wallingford. Tickets from £12, for more information go to cornexchange.org.uk or call 01491 825000.

In rehearsal, Cookie (Mick Harris) 'ain't gonna wash for a week' after a peck on the cheek from Miranda (Sophie Beaumont)

DIY music makers

MUSIC: Prolific DIY rock trio Elevant are back with new material and return to Oxford for a gig at the Jericho Tavern on Sunday, May 14.

The new tracks were recorded at Abbey Road Studios and will be available via the band's own Loner Noise / Elevant Music Limited imprint later this year.For more information go to elevantband.com/

Kiss Me Kate

OPERA: The Chipping Norton Amateur Operatic Society follow their 2016 sell out production of Fiddler on the Roof with Cole Porter's wonderful musical Kiss Me Kate.

Staged at Chipping Norton Theatre, the show takes place from May 25 to May 27. Tickets from £12, for more information go to chippingnortontheatre.com

Is there room?

THEATRE: Julia Donaldson favourite Room on the Broom will be staged at the Oxford Playhouse on Thursday and Friday, June 1 and 2.

Join the witch and her cat on their mission to defeat the dragon in this musical adaptation of the children's picture book by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler.

For more information go to oxfordplayhouse.com

THE ELEVENTH
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In 2017, the BBC Concert Orchestra returns to The English Music Festival with world première performances of important works by Vaughan Williams, Stanford and Montague Phillips, while other events range from major orchestral and choral concerts in Dorchester Abbey, through the soaring voices of choristers and English piano trios, to a late evening guitar recital and the dapper New Foxtrot Serenaders. Join us for another Festival full of exquisite music-making, fascinating talks and bubbling conviviality!

For further information contact Festival Director
Em Marshall-Luck at English Music Festival, Suite M0222,
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or by email to: em.marshall-luck@englishmusicfestival.org.uk.

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ENTERTAINMENT & LISTINGS

A nose for a good story

By Samantha McGregor

WHO could love a man with such an enormous nose?

This is the question perplexing Cyrano de Bergerac in the classic French tale coming to the Playhouse this month.

Set in the golden age of musketeers, Cyrano is a swashbuckling tale of unrequited love set in Paris in 1640.

Cyrano de Bergerac, a brilliant poet and swordsman, finds himself deeply in love with his beautiful cousin Roxane. Each day of his life is lived only for her – every poem he writes, every duel he fights.

Despite his dash and his dare, Cyrano is afraid of revealing his true feelings, certain she could never love him in return... for who would love a man with such an enormous nose?

Northern Broadsides brings its own musical panache and exuberant performance style for an evening of pure drama.

Playing the title role will be Christian Edwards, who has previously played Grantaire in Les Misérables, in London's West End.

He is joined by a few recognisable faces from other Oxford Playhouse productions.

Christian Edwards as Cyrano and Sharon Singh as Roxane Picture: Nobby Clark

Cyrano is the first production of Northern Broadsides 25th anniversary year.

The French romantic comedy was also made into a successful 1990 movie starring Gerard Depardieu and Anne Brochet. It made it onto Empire magazine's 2010 list of 100 best films of world cinema.

This contemporary and lively new adaptation, appears at the Oxford Playhouse from Tuesday May 23 to Saturday May 27.

Tickets for Cyrano at Oxford Playhouse start at £11.50 and are available from the ticket office on 01865 305305 or go to oxfordplayhouse.com

Golden years

WHEN legendary Oxfordshire folk band Fairport Convention take the stage on May 27 it will be 50 years to the day since their first gig.

The birthday concert takes place at the Union Chapel in Islington just a few miles from the Golders Green venue where Fairport started out.

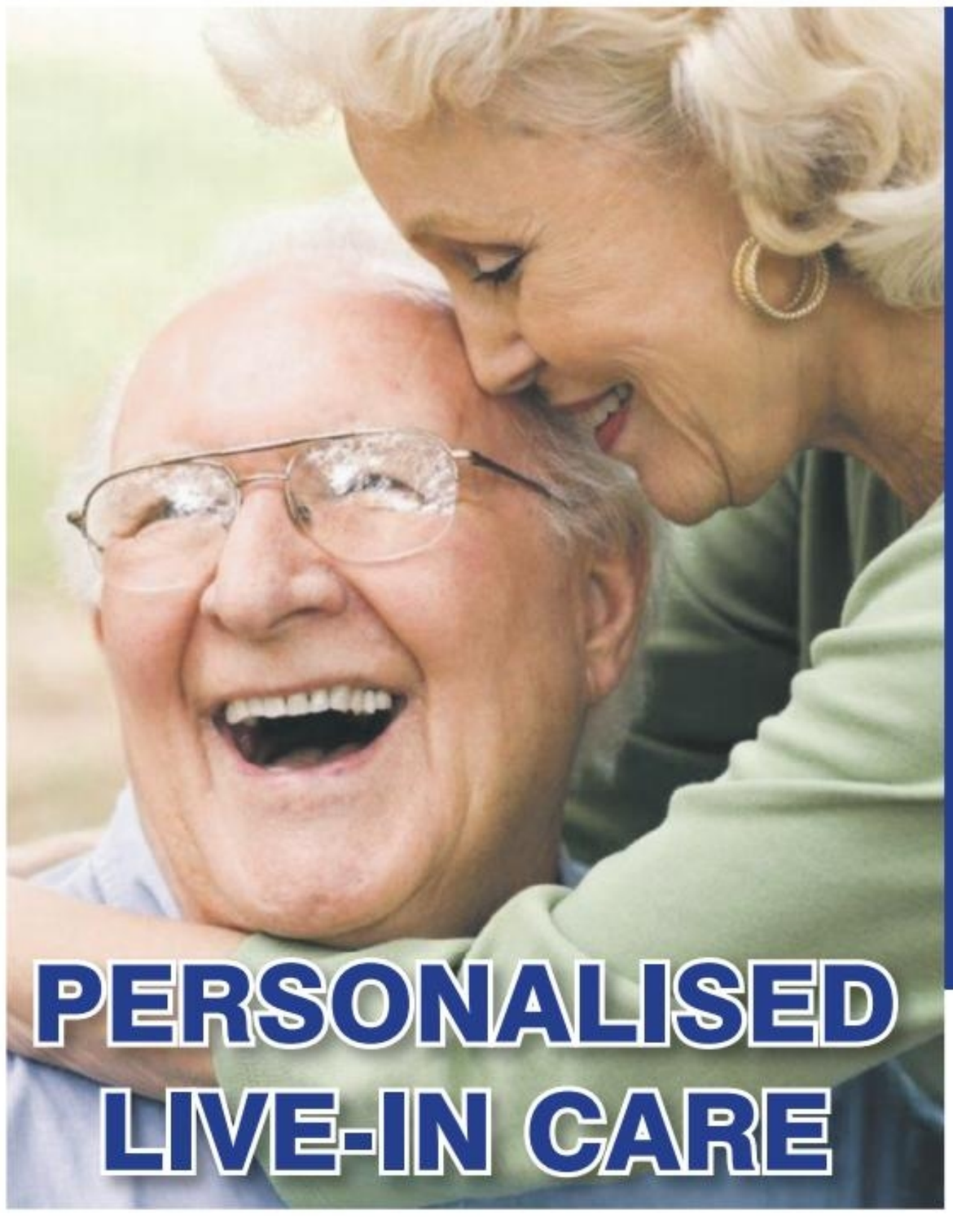
For anyone not able to make the London concert, then August 10 to 12 must go in the diary as the anniversary will culminate at the band's own music festival at Cropredy, near Banbury, where past members will join the current line-up for a reunion performance.

One of the only touring bands with an unbroken history stretching back five decades, Fairport has been performing and recording more or less constantly since its inception.

Fairport also nurtured the careers of Richard Thompson, Sandy Denny and Dave Swarbrick among others.

Its current line-up has been stable since 1998. Simon Nicol, lead singer and guitarist, is the only founding member still with Fairport; bass player Dave Pegg has been in the band since 1970.

For more information go to fairportconvention.com



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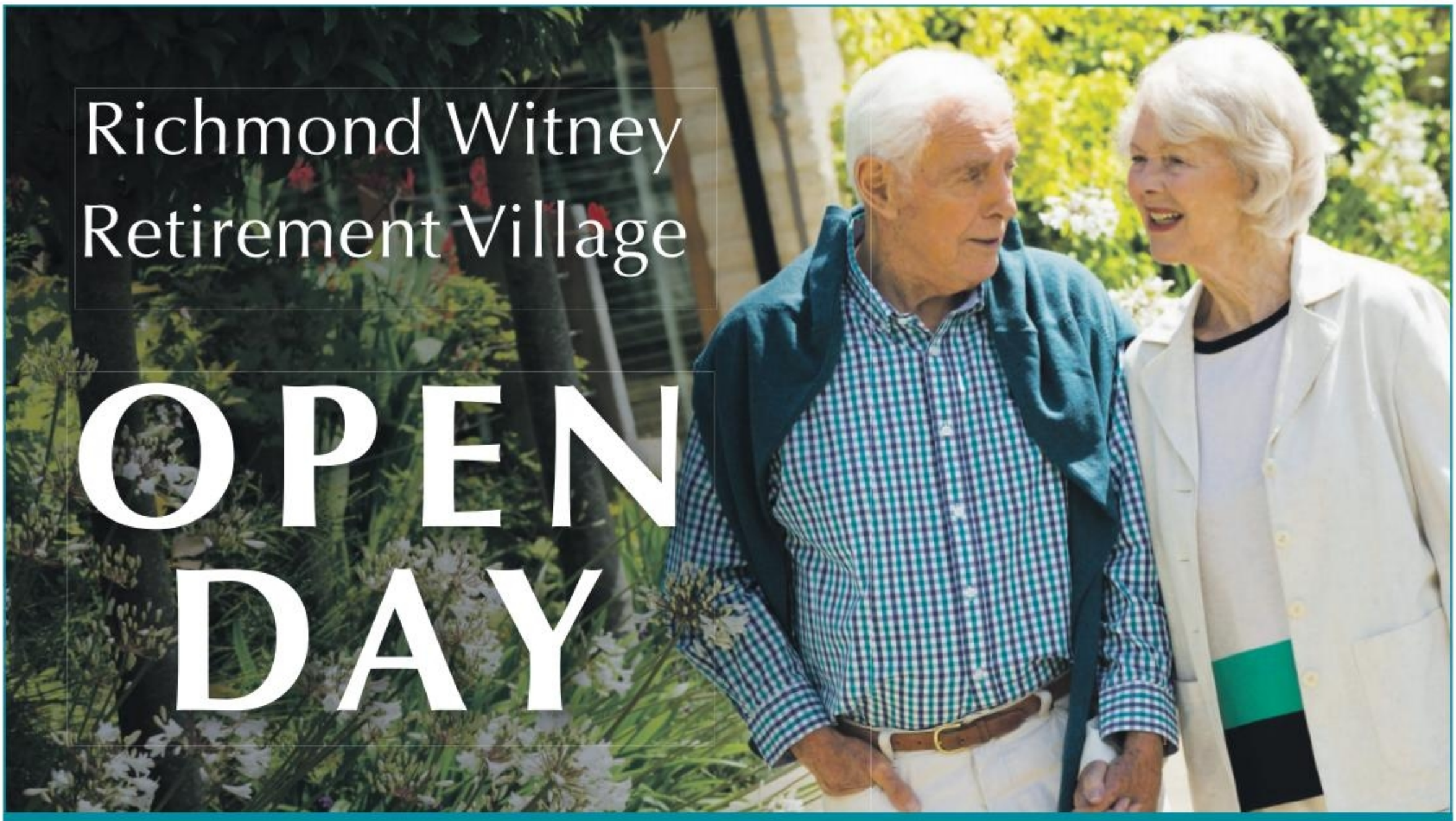

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ENTERTAINMENT & LISTINGS

Sweet dreams from newcomer Will

By Samantha McGregor

UP-AND-COMING singer songwriter Will Joseph Cook will perform in Oxford for one night only as part of a tour to promote his new album.

The 18-year-old from Tunbridge Wells performs songs from his album 'Sweet Dreamer' at The Bullingdon tomorrow night.

Will has described his new tunes as "13 songs technicolour indie pop" written over the past few years, "acting as a diary of sorts of his adolescence and teenage years".

The record was recorded in London and was produced by Hugh Worskett and Bombay Bicycle Club's Jack Steadman.

Ahead of his visit to Oxford, Will took time out to speak to the Oxfordshire Guardian.

Asked how he got into music, he said: "It started out as a soundcloud/YouTube thing for me. Sharing home recordings, mainly just guitar and vocal.

"Recording and writing was definitely the main interest for me at the beginning."

For him, his career high so far has undoubtedly been the release of his album.

He said: "We had a party that night with fans and friends. Watching people's reactions online was very cool.

"I'm sure the tour will have new high points to offer though."

Will used his own life-experiences to pen the album and is pretty proud of his work. He said: "Lyrically it's very biographical, I've always written like that.

"If it comes from a genuine place I think that is really important to the listener, even if it is subversive.

"Ultimately I wanted to write the kind of alternative pop record I wanted to hear."

So what can Oxford expect from the gig – the tour has taken in venues in Glasgow, Newcastle, Birmingham and London, Will said: "It's gonna be huge. The last show of a tour is always great. I'm hosting a big indie disco after party with my pal George at the Bullingdon, looking forward to it lots."

Alongside Will at the Bullingdon is Ethan Barnett, aka Ten Tonnes, a 20-year-old musician from Hertford.

He is set to perform some of the songs he has recorded in the past year with the likes of Dan Auerbach of The Black Keys, Cherry Ghost's Simon Aldred and Hugo White from The Maccabees.

For more information go to thebullingdon.co.uk

Tower-ing acts

KT Tunstall, Newton Faulkner, Show Of Hands, Eliza Carthy and Lindisfarne are all set to appear at this year's Towersey Festival.

One of the UK's longest running music festivals, the annual Oxfordshire event takes place from Friday August 25 to Monday August 28.

Last week organisers confirmed Thames Valley Air Ambulance, TVAA, is set to be its charity partner, for the second consecutive year.

The festival, held at Thame Showground, will feature more than 100 acts will be appearing across a dozen stages.

There's also street theatre, workshops for all ages, real ale and cider, gourmet street food, films, spoken word, comedy and dedicated events for children, young people and families.

Towersey Festival director Joe Heap said: "We're pleased to be able to continue to support Thames Valley Air Ambulance with their life-saving work across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire.

"We'd like to thank all the Towersey-goers who gave generously last year, and encourage all attending the festival over the August Bank Holiday this year to find out about TVAA's invaluable work."

For more information about Towersey Festival and to book tickets go to towerseyfestival.com

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ENTERTAINMENT & LISTINGS

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Thu, May 11
The Beacon, Wantage
OBSESSION
Jude Law (The Young Pope, Closer, The Talented Mr Ripley) stars in the stage production of Obsession, broadcast live from the Barbican Theatre in London. Ivo van Hove (NT Live: A View from the Bridge, Hedda Gabler) directs this new stage adaptation of Luchino Visconti's 1943 film.

Fri, May 12
O2 Academy, Oxford
END OF AN ERA

Sat, May 13
Cornerstone Arts Centre, Didcot
KATY BRAND – I WAS A TEENAGE CHRISTIAN
Katy Brand's hit Edinburgh Festival show I Was a Teenage Christian is an honest, fascinating and funny exploration of her self-imposed conversion and total immersion in evangelical Christianity.

Sat, May 13, 11pm
O2 Academy, Oxford
THE OXFORD SOUL TRAIN

Welcome aboard The Oxford Soul Train. A night train taking you on an uplifting journey filled with funk, soul, disco and motown classics, leading you along the tracks and grooves with those licks of hard hitting horns, punchy rhythms and storming beats!

Sun, May 14
New Theatre, Oxford
PAUL RODGERS
Paul Rodgers legendary singer, songwriter and frontman for Free, Bad Company and The Firm has announced that he will be heading out across the UK this May on the FREE Spirit Tour performing songs strictly from the Free catalogue.

Mon, May 15 – Sat, May 20
The New Theatre, Oxford
SISTER ACT
Sister Act tells the hilarious story of Deloris Van Cartier, a disco diva whose life takes a surprising turn when she witnesses a murder. Under protective custody she is hidden in the one place she won't be found – a Convent! Disguised as a nun and under the suspicious watch of Mother Superior, Deloris helps her fellow sisters find their voices as she unexpectedly rediscovers her own.

Thu, May 16, 7pm
O2 Academy, Oxford
THE COMET IS COMING
The Comet Is Coming support their Mercury-nominated debut album, Channel the Spirits. The band's intoxicating sound fuses elements of jazz, funk, electronica and psychedelic rock.

Thu, May 18, 7pm
O2 Academy, Oxford
THE MISSION
The Mission embark on a UK tour in support of their new studio album, Another Fall From Grace.

Sun, May 21
Oxford University Parks
RAG GARDEN PARTY
Oxford RAG is proud to invite you to an afternoon of tea, croquet live music and cocktails at our brand new charity event - the RAG Garden Party! Join us for a long, lazy summer's afternoon and enjoy some of Oxford's finest live music, sweet and savoury treats and scenery, along with unlimited alcohol, all nestled away in the beautiful parks!
Ticket's go on sale on Sunday 7th and will sell out quick at a bargain price of £20; so, to find out more information and to buy your ticket head to: facebook.com/events/103604310207063/

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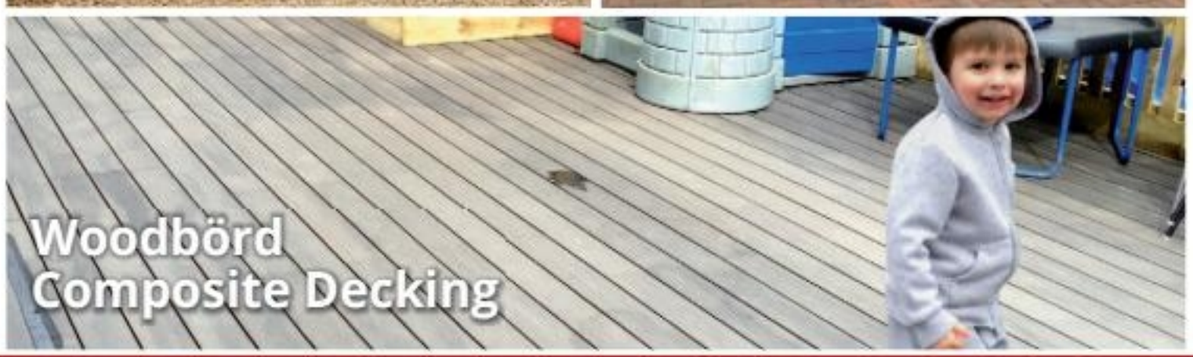

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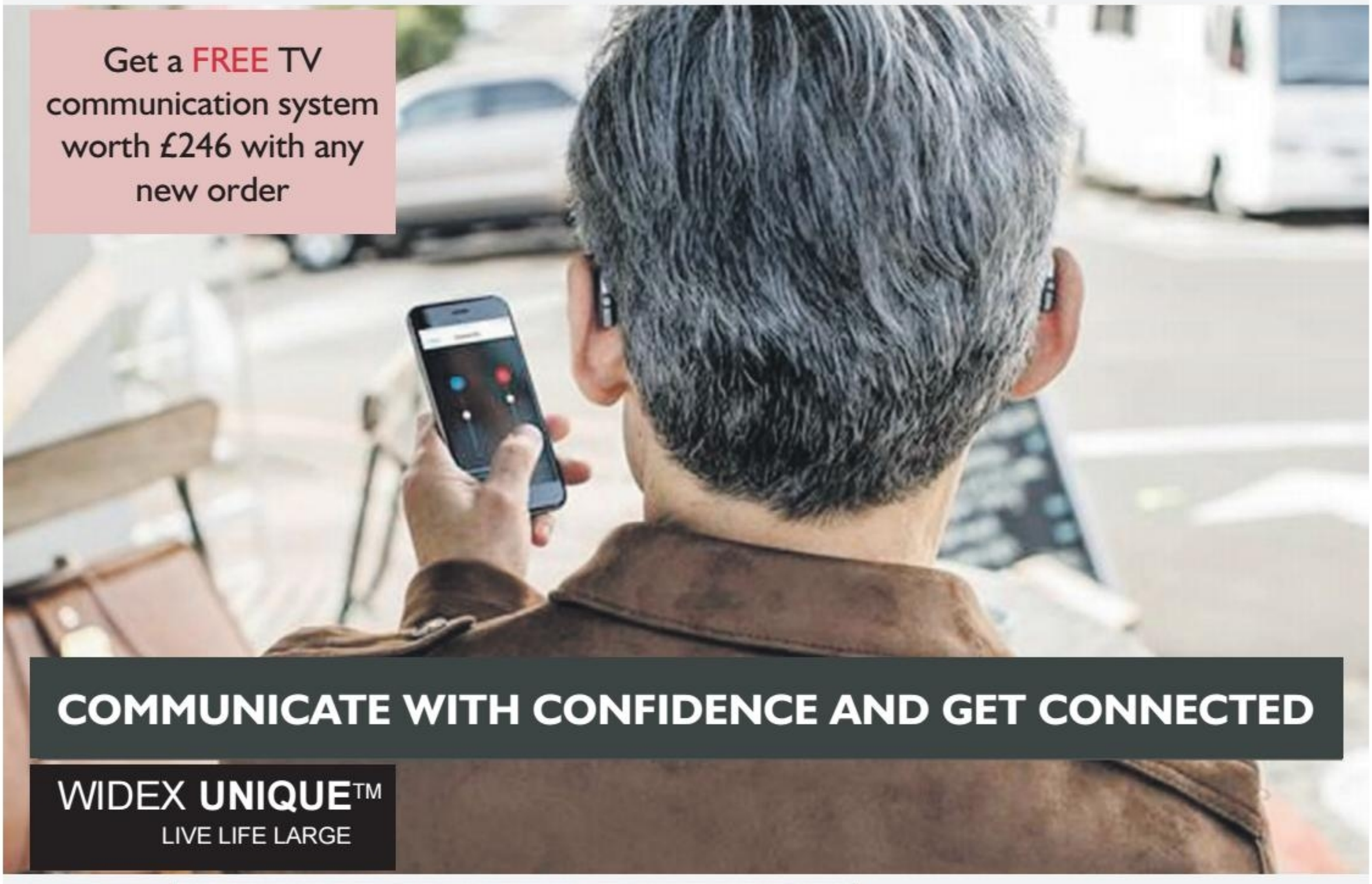
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Advertorial MAY 2017

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The survey confirms what some Audiologists have suspected for some time, that hearing aids are not only good for correcting hearing loss but in fact contribute to better and more active lives, better quality of life, and better overall health.

For the hearing impaired workers who wear a hearing aid it is reported that their hearing aids are useful for their job and that the hearing aids also increase the chance of them getting promoted, being in the right job and getting more salary compared to those hearing impaired people who have not obtained hearing aids.

The full report can be found at EuroTrak UK 2015 – ehima

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Jaguar F-Pace 'S' - 3.0 300PS AWD

Packed with features and fast too

By **Tony Yates**

Power and efficiency

The F-Pace I had on test was powered by a 3.0 litre V6 turbocharged Diesel engine that had 300PS on tap - and boasts a mind blowing top speed of 150mph, plus a 0-60 time of 5.8 seconds. Fuel consumption is also very good with a combined figure of 47.1 mpg. Jaguar really has made big strides in getting the most out of their engines – along with the ability to perform really well. The F-Pace also has 700Nm of torque - which translates into something quite spectacular when the next overtaking opportunity comes along or you need that extra grunt.

On the road

The F-Pace is very good indeed - it feels very nimble and taut considering its size. I love the stable handling, smooth ride and agile response. You really can feel that the engineers have done a fantastic job of getting that balance just right. You also get a lot of good feedback from all four corners thanks to its AWD ability - giving you the confidence to push that little bit harder at the next twist in the road.

A big plus point for the F-Pace though is how well it pulls from pretty much any gear. Then there are the brakes - which feel very good and will easily have you at a controlled standstill in no time at all.

Safety and technology

Safety also seems paramount for Jaguar because the F-Pace is fitted with; 6 airbags (driver and front passenger) with side curtain airbags, front side airbags and seat occupant detector for passenger. There is also ABS, Dynamic Stability Control + AEB, Emergency Brake Assist and Jaguar Drive Control –different modes are selectable by a button to optimise the vehicles response depending on conditions and style.

Space; inside the cabin is a big plus point for the F-Pace, as it has plenty of room for five adults. Boot space is good and even better with its split folding rear seat. Then there is the interior – I have never seen such attention to detail – everything fits perfectly and the materials used inside are first class.

Standard equipment on the F-Pace comes in the form of; a full fat 'S' styled bodykit, all wheel drive, torque vectoring, Front & rear parking aid, 8" capacitive touchscreen, satellite navigation, dual zone climate control, cruise control with (ASL) LED rear lights, approach illumination, heated front seats, Jaguar smart key with keyless start, rain sensing windscreen wipers, Jaguar drive control, hill launch assist, Bluetooth telephone connectivity and audio streaming, split fold rear seat; 40:20:40, powered tailgate, electric parking brake, whiplash protection, land departure warning (LDW), all surface progress control (ASPC) - Auto only) DAB radio and DMB, Meridian sound system (380W). This is just a small amount of the features you can expect.

To sum up: Jaguar has shown that they can continually produce some really stunning vehicles. And for 50k, I doubt you could find anything as good as the Jaguar F-Pace 'S'

Standard price (from) £51,450 OTR – excluding extras

• *The Jaguar F-Pace 'S' offers great value for money*

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Fuel consumption figures for the Civic 129PS i-VTEC SR Turbo Manual mpg (l/100km): Urban 44.1 (6.4), Extra Urban 64.2 (4.4), Combined 55.4 (5.1). CO_2 emissions: 117g/km. Fuel consumption figures sourced from official EU-regulated laboratory test results, are provided for comparison purposes and may not reflect real-life driving experience.

Model Shown: 2017 Civic 129PS i-VTEC SR Manual in Rallye Red at £20,340 On The Road (OTR). Terms and Conditions: New retail Civic i-VTEC Turbo petrol ordered from 01 April 2017 to 30 June 2017 and registered by 30 June 2017. Subject to model and colour availability. Not to be used along with any other offers currently available. Honda deposit contribution: £750 Honda deposit contribution on new Civic i-VTEC Turbo petrol models purchased through Honda Aspirations. 5.9% APR representative Honda Aspirations (PCP): Maximum customer deposit 30%. You do not have to pay the Final Payment if you return the car at the end of the agreement and you have paid all other amounts due, the vehicle is in good condition and has been serviced in accordance with the Honda service book and the maximum annual mileage has not been exceeded. Excess mileage charge includes VAT at current rate. Indemnities may be required in certain circumstances. Finance is only available to persons aged 18 or over, subject to status. All figures are correct at time of publication but may be subject to change. Honda Franchise Dealers are credit brokers, not lenders. Credit provided by Honda Finance Europe Plc. Cain Road, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 1HL. Honda Financial Services is a trading name of Honda Finance Europe Plc. Cain Road, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 1HL a company registered at Companies House No 03289418. Honda Finance Europe Plc is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority, Financial Services Register number 312541. *A discount for the cost of 3 years' road fund licence will be passed to the customer and shown on the order form as discount in lieu of road fund licence. Please note it is the customer's responsibility to tax the vehicle when applicable. Johnsons Cars Ltd (Firm Reference Number: 512460) are an Appointed Representative of ITC Compliance Ltd, and are authorised & regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (their registration number is 313486) and are permitted to advise on and arrange General Insurance contracts.

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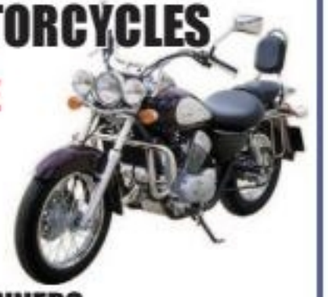

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Announcements

Sophia Haynes
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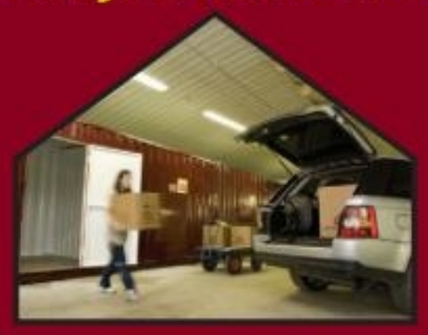

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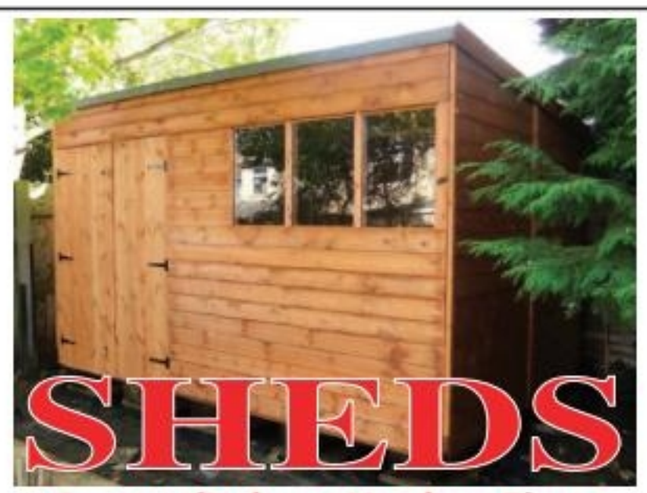

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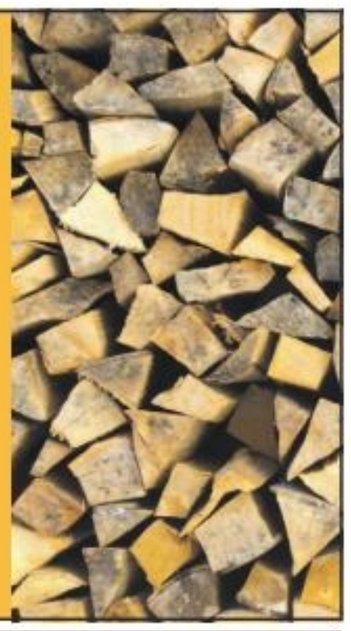

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Fixing brakes will take time warns Haas

F1

BRAKE problems are still plaguing Haas as they head into this weekend's Spanish Grand Prix.

The Banbury-based team has been struggling with cooling issues in the early part of this season, something that was also a problem in 2016.

They switched between brake suppliers Brembo and Carbon Industries during the Russian Grand Prix weekend, but are reverting back to the former for Barcelona.

Team principal Guenther Steiner has admitted there is no quick fix.

He said: "We will get there. Everybody needs to understand that this is a very sophisticated brake system. It is not easy to fix.

"The obvious question, and rightly people ask, is that it cannot be this difficult to fix a brake, but it actually is.

"Without testing during the season, you can never go and do a proper test and do modifications. You always have to fit it in somehow and that's why it takes so long.

"It's not that we're not working hard. Our people are very competent and can do this, it just takes time."

Much-needed win for Saints

American football

THE Oxford Saints chalked up a much-needed 35-14 victory against the Ouse Valley Eagles at Tilsley Park.

Oxford broke the deadlock through running back James Walter who sprinted for a 44-yard touchdown run. Dean Fuller's extra point kick was deflected but the Saints took an early 6-0 lead.

The Eagles hit back and on the fourth down Jacob Corbett looked to the air and found and hit receiver Richard Batten for a 28-yard touchdown pass. Mike Turner kicked the extra point through the uprights to give Ouse Valley a 7-6 lead.

They piled the pressure on the Saints and increased their lead when Kalaba Chibwe touched down after a five-yard rush to make it 14-6, Mike Turner again adding the extra point.

Tony Glover gave Oxford hope, making it 14-12 with a touchdown following a 22-yard rush. Saints opted for a two point conversion and Walter passed to Richard Bloomer who made it 14-14 going in at half time.

Oxford started the second half strongly and took the lead with Glove punching the ball in for his second touchdown of the day. Fuller added the extra point to make it 21-14 to Oxford.

The Saints were really dominating now and Glove added his third score of the day from three yards.

Fuller's kick extended the margin to 28-14.

The defence held firm against the Eagles who surged forward but Glover scored a two-yard touchdown for his fourth score of the day.

Fuller remained solid and added another successful kick to make it 35-14 to Oxford and they took the victory.

Winging it to Spain

Nico Hulkenberg will be looking to improve on his eighth place finish from Russia. Picture: Renault Sport Formula One Team

F1

By Adam Flinn

RENAULT are bringing more upgrades to this weekend's Spanish Grand Prix as they continue to look for better race performance.

The Enstone-based team has new barge boards and an updated rear wing for this Sunday's race in Barcelona.

It comes after a raft of updates fitted in time for the last race in Russia helped Nico Hulkenberg to eighth place.

Spain, being the start of the European season, is often where the teams bring in their first major upgrade package of the year.

Nick Chester, Renault's chassis technical director, said: "The upgrades we used in Sochi worked as expected so we made a useful step in our race pace while maintaining qualifying pace.

"We're in the midfield fight where we expected to be, but it's a very close battle here so we need to ensure we seize every possible advantage from the car and how we use it.

"We have new barge boards and an updated rear wing and we need to keep adding performance to the car as that's what everyone else is fighting to do."

At Grove-based Williams, the team are looking to make amends for the puncture that cost Felipe Massa a valuable haul of points in Russia.

He seemed certain to finish sixth but had to make a second pitstop for a slow puncture that dropped him down to ninth, thereby costing him six points.

Chief technical officer Paddy Lowe said: "This is the first time we have seen all the cars and freight come back to the factory since everything headed out to Australia in March.

"It's also the time the first major upgrades are brought to the cars, which is even more significant given the new aerodynamic regulations.

"We didn't get the points we wanted in Russia but we can see the potential. Our aim is to bring home two cars with points finishes in Spain."

Poor weekend as Plato struggles

Touring cars

JASON Plato's woes with the Subaru Levorg continued as he was left languishing down the order in the British Touring Car Championship at Thruxton on Sunday.

The Oxford racer and two-time series champion could only manage a best finish of 23rd in the three races in a second consecutive pointless weekend.

He qualified a lowly 21st on the grid for race one and couldn't improve on that in the race, dropping to 23rd.

Starting 23rd for race two he lost another two places to end up 25th and ended up last in race three after having to pit.

It comes as one of his team-mates, Ash Sutton, seems to have got a handle on the Subaru, coming home sixth, eighth and sixth in the three races.

Plato's other two team-mates, James Cole and Josh Price, have also been suffering problems this season, and are yet to score any points.

Plato does have four points from the opening weekend in Brands Hatch, but it will be of little comfort as he lies 23rd in the championship standings.

The next round of the season is at Oulton Park in Cheshire on May 21.

Jason Plato struggled once again at Thruxton. Picture: btcc.net

New engine pays dividends for racer Bradley

Bradley Smith picked up points at the Spanish Grand Prix Picture: Sebas Romero

MotoGP

NEW engines helped KTM race to more points as Oxford rider Bradley Smith crossed the chequered flag for a season-high finish of 14th place.

The Forest Hill racer picked up two points at the Spanish Grand Prix in Jerez on Sunday to take his tally for the season to three.

Following a successful MotoGP test in Le Mans at the start of the month Red Bull KTM factory team had new engines delivered from their Austrian base in time for the Jerez GP.

And they had an instant impact as Smith and his teammate Pol Espargaro recorded their best qualifying positions this season, starting Sunday's race in 16th and 15th.

The team's positive start to the weekend was cut short however when Spaniard Espargaro crashed when in 11th position. KTM said the crash was fast but he returned to the garage unhurt.

The race, in front of 69,000 fans, was still one of progress for Smith.

The 26-year-old said: "It's been a solid weekend for us. Qualifying was solid but it was tricky in the race as we'd never run with these kind of track temperatures with a hard front tyre, so it's still a learning process.

"With hindsight, we could have changed some things but that's what we learn as a team with this project... but what a step forward from the first three races and a great step to again look forward to at the next race at Le Mans."

Team manager Mike Leitner added: "This weekend has been very positive for us. All the effort from the company for us to utilise this new engine is proof of the hard work from everyone at the factory."

Stars say 'bring it on'

Ice Hockey

By George Welch

DIRECTORS at Oxford City Stars have said they are ready for the challenge after a major restructuring of the English ice hockey league.

Following a meeting of National Ice Hockey League (NIHL) South teams on Sunday, the English Ice Hockey Association (EIHA) announced the new format for the 2017/18 season after more than six hours of discussions.

The Stars said last month they were concerned for their future as confusion surrounded the league's future.

But this week the Oxpens Road side, who previously played in the NIHL, the third tier of British ice hockey, said 'bring it on' to the challenge ahead.

There will be 12 teams in Division 1 – the new second tier – which will be split into two conferences of six teams.

Oxford director James Schall said: "It's a huge challenge for us but we're up for it and hope our fans, players, the city council and commercial partners join us in that challenge."

Oxford City Stars have been placed in Conference A and will be joined by Bracknell Bees, Basingstoke Bison, Milton Keynes Thunder, Solent Devils and Cardiff Fire.

Teams will play others in their own conference twice home and away, and teams out of conference once home and once away.

With this jump to the second tier, and with the Stars due to clash with Swindon for the first time in many years, the club is expecting bumper crowds at Oxpens Road.

City Stars chiefs said they hope fans will flock to Oxpens Road to back their team in a higher division, especially in light of lowered parking costs and the cheapest season tickets in the league.

Director Russell Shrives added: "We're in planning mode immediately and are reaching out to supporters to help us achieve success. Let's make the city proud."

Season tickets are priced at £99 for adults and £39 for under 16s until the end of June.

The club, who are also seeking new sponsors and commercial partners, praised the NIHL, the EIHA and all other teams involved "for the professional and constructive way in which they dealt with the challenges faced".

The NIHL season will begin on the weekend of September 2/3 and is scheduled to end April 7/8.

Joe Edwards in action for Oxford City Stars. Picture: Oxford City Stars

Genny Porter and Carla Wood's feat is recorded in flashing lights

Scoreboard tells the tale

Cricket

OXFORDSHIRE Women are looking to continue their fine start to the season when they face Dorset in their second game at Bicester and North Oxford Cricket Club on Sunday.

This follows on from the emphatic 84-run victory over Wiltshire earlier this month.

A maiden Oxfordshire century for Genny Porter and 68 not out from Carla Wood helped the hosts post an imposing 240-1.

In a rain-affected Wiltshire innings, Ellie Norton and Sophie Mitchelmore took two wickets apiece and there was one each for Hannah Timmins and Emilia Bartram.

Two run outs in an excellent fielding display saw Wiltshire finish their reduced allocation of 36 overs on 89-8, chasing a reduced target of 173.

The 50-over match versus Dorset will start at 11am.

Their male counterparts went down by seven wickets against local rivals Berkshire at the weekend. Oxfordshire managed just 146 having elected to bat, before seeing Berkshire surpass their total in just 33 overs.

Bicester's winning streak stumped

Cricket

BICESTER and North Oxford Cricket Club's long winning streak came to an end at the weekend.

They succumbed to a 71-run defeat at Wolvercote Town in their opening Cherwell League, having not experienced defeat since 2015.

BNOCC went unbeaten during their promotion season from Division 4 last time out but this was a stark reminder of the challenges that face them in Division 3 where they crumbled dramatically in pursuit of 169.

The hosts' top and middle order batsmen struggled to get to grips with the bowling of Dan Savin (3-30), Chris de Kock (4-64) and debutant Andy Godbold (3-30) who tore into them.

Some Wolvercote resistance was provided by Aky Hussain (14) and Ahsan Malik (28) and there was further frustration for the Bicester bowlers caused by Michael Yates (39) and number 10 Haroon Malik (41).

Bicester went into the mid-innings break confident they could chase 169 but could muster little resistance.

Nick Moorman went first for 11, closely followed by Alistair Gibbins for 14. Skipper Ryan Moore could only watch as BNOCC capitulated, losing Rob Humphreys, Warwick Bradfield and Danny Clark all for ducks.

Oliver Ward (13) and Moore (24) provided brief stability and Moore and de Kock appeared to have blunted the Wolvercote attack.

But once the captain fell, that was pretty much it. All out for 98.

Girls are cock-a-hoop!

Basketball

FOLLOWING a gruelling day of trials in Winchester two girls from Oxford have dribbled, passed and shot their way into the Southern England basketball team.

Oxford Hoops and Oxfordshire U11s players Olivia and Ahriya, both 10 years old, competed against the best from across southern England and made the biggest of impressions on the panel of coaches.

Their teammate at Oxfordshire U11s LK Mahalingham, who plays for Abingdon Eagles, also made the cut.

The trio have now been selected for the England South U11s basketball team, which features the top 20 young basketball players – 10 girls and 10 boys – across the counties of Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Hampshire.

All three will now start team training and then represent England South at a national tournament next month.

Shiv Mahalingham, Oxfordshire U11s team coach, said their selection is a "remarkable" achievement given the "fierce" competition for places.

"Every person at the trial was there because of their fundamental basketball skills – such as defensive positions, ability to move off either foot, court awareness, passing and shooting," he said.

"But to make the final squad, they would have displayed something more – character.

Olivia and Ahriya

"Olivia, Ahriya and LK have made it because they impressed the judges with their fantastic attitude and hunger for the game."

The three young sports are now training for the national tournament on June 11, where England South U11s will compete against nine other UK regions.

An ex-professional basketball player himself, Mr Mahalingham urged youngsters to get involved in the sport

He said: "All our players feel a massive sense of unity and see that their hard work, effort and team effort really do bring benefits in other aspects of their young lives.

"One mum told me that her child is performing better at school since they started playing basketball.

"Another said that since her child became part of our basketball community they are able to feel a sense of identity as part of a strong team and culture."

Club is serving up a cardiac workout

Tennis

WANTAGE Tennis Club is to serve up a fun family morning as part of the Great British Tennis Weekend.

The Manor Road-based club will open its doors from 10am to 1pm to people of all ages and abilities for a morning of fun activities on Saturday.

There will be a 'cardio-tennis' event – a group activity with a qualified instructor where competitors get to 'hit lots of tennis balls and have a great cardio workout at the same time' supported by motivating music.

Club chairman Mark Rowe said: "We're delighted to be part of this nationwide initiative and look forward to seeing those who want to get on court as well as those that would just like to come and find out a little bit more about what Wantage Tennis Club has to offer."

Spaces are limited so visit www.clubspark.lta.org.uk/opendays to book sessions in advance and avoid disappointment.

There will be refreshments for those who prefer just to watch what's going on.

There will also be an opportunity to chat with coaches and club members about what's on offer all year round, including the newly refurbished "pay and play" courts open to the public.

Charlie Watton of Wantage Tennis Club follows advice from his coach

2016/17 season review: August - December

United sow the seeds for what became an impressive season

SEPTEMBER: Oxford players celebrate their second goal in at 2-0 home win over rivals Swindon Town

THE 2016/17 season was one to remember for Oxford United. Michael Appleton's side won promotion on the last game of the previous season to earn the right to play in English football's third tier for just the first time in 15 years.

United fans were optimistic but how they would fare on their return to SkyBet League One was unknown, especially after losing key players Kemar Roofe and Callum O'Dowda to the Championship.

Between August and May, the U's crammed in unforgettable cup runs, a double over arch rivals Swindon Town, another Wembley appearance and an unexpected flirtation with the play-offs before finishing eighth.

Here, we start a review of the season with a look back at 2016.

2016

August

U's head coach Appleton splashed the cash north of the border as he tried to fill the Roofe and O'Dowda shaped void in Oxford's attack.

More than £250,000 was spent to recruit Dundee striker Kane Hemmings and the club smashed their transfer record for Motherwell utility man Marvin Johnson for a fee believed to be higher than the £470,000 the club paid for Dean Windass in 1998.

A further 12 players bolstered United's ranks in the summer transfer window, including goalkeeper Simon Eastwood, defender Curtis Nelson and midfielder Ryan Ledson, who would all go on to stamp their mark on the season.

On the pitch, United were slow to adjust to their higher division and only picked up one win from their first five league games.

Striker Wes Thomas struck as the U's opened the campaign at the Kassam with a credible 1-1 draw against Chesterfield.

There was no evidence of a season that would end with such optimism as August consisted of three league defeats away at Bristol Rovers, Fleetwood Town and Sheffield United.

The first league win of the season arrived in a 2-1 home win against Peterborough United thanks to a stoppage time Chris Maguire penalty – his first of 17 in a prolific season.

Liam Sercombe scored a dramatic 120th minute winner to beat Championship side Birmingham City in emphatic style in the EFL Cup first round. But the EFL Cup campaign ended in the same month it started when Premier League-bound Brighton proved too strong and left the Kassam with a 4-2 win.

September

The winning feeling returned to Grenoble Road in the second month of the season with a four match unbeaten run consisting of two wins and two draws.

But U's fans will hold onto the winning feeling of one match in particular.

A brace from Chris Maguire made sure the bragging rights remained in Oxfordshire as United extended their winning run over arch rivals Swindon Town to make it six wins in a row.

The Robins were already 2-0 down when Lloyd Jones and goalkeeper Lawrence Vigouroux saw red for Swindon in the second half.

The U's picked up their first point on the road with a 0-0 draw in their first ever meeting with Milton Keynes Dons.

But the month ended with a defeat at Southend United to leave United in a respectable 10th position after 10 games.

October

The first taste of victory away from home came at an unlikely ground with the Yellows coming away from Bolton's Macron Stadium with maximum points. Only two other teams achieved that this season.

Appleton's side were still coming to terms with the step up and this was reflected in their October form, which read two wins, a draw and three defeats.

One shining light was the emergence of Arsenal loanee Dan Crowley. The youngster scored in back-to-back games, including a late consolation against Coventry City and the second in a 2-2 draw at Port Vale.

However, the midfielder would only go on to make two more appearances before returning to his parent club for off-the-field reasons in November.

Oxford squared up to Swindon for the second time in as many months when they travelled to their Wiltshire rivals for their second group stage game in the re-formatted Johnstone's Paint Trophy, now known as the Checkatrade Trophy.

Town won on penalties after a goalless draw to collect a bonus point under the new rules.

There may have been a lack of goal mouth action but winger Alex MacDonald received a red card just before half-time. It was the fifth red card in the last five meetings between the sides and the seventh in the last eight.

November

2016's penultimate month began with the return of the excitement of the FA Cup.

United were keen replicate an impressive run the previous year when they beat Premier League side Swansea City before being knocked out by Championship team Blackburn Rovers in the fourth round.

And the U's were thoroughly professional as they dismantled Isthmian League Division One South side Merstham 5-0 to avoid a giant killing live in front of the TV cameras.

Kane Hemmings bagged a brace that day and the striker scored again as the cup action continued in the Checkatrade Trophy match at Chelsea's development side.

His 93rd minute equaliser secured United's passage into the next round of the competition but also sent the match to a needless penalty shootout as Chelsea had already been knocked out.

NOVEMBER: Kane Hemmings slides the ball under Merstham keeper Phil Wilson for the third goal in Oxford's 5-0 FA Cup win

But the match at Stamford Bridge will was written into the footballing history books after the two sides played out the longest penalty shootout in English football history.

After 34 penalties, Chelsea came out victorious in a 13-12 win. John Lundstram (twice), Wes Thomas (twice) and Aaron Martin all missed for the U's.

Back in the league and the U's slumped to 19th in the table – their lowest position throughout the season after matchday four – after losing 2-1 at Shrewsbury Town.

Back-to-back home wins against Coventry City and Gillingham rubbished any suggestions of an impending relegation struggle, however.

December

For a second month running Oxford began the month with an FA Cup tie, but they didn't have it all their own way this time in the second round.

Again they were live on TV, but this time the free-flowing, goal-happy U's of the first round were nullified by a plucky Macclesfield Town outfit who play two tiers above their first round victims.

It took a comfortable 3-0 replay win for United to secure their passage to round three, where they would meet Championship champions-elect Newcastle United in January.

It was third time lucky for the Yellows who needed another Checkatrade Trophy penalty shootout to beat Southend United to edge closer to a Wembley return.

Despite previous shootout defeats to Swindon and Chelsea, West Brom loanee Tyler Roberts held his nerve to send the U's through.

It was to be his last goal-scoring contribution for the club before leaving for League One rivals Shrewsbury Town on loan.

There was a festive goal drought at the Kassam as home Boxing Day and New Years Eve matches returned a solitary point and no goals.

Northampton Town and Walsall were the Christmas party poopers and Town striker Marc Richards played the role of the Grinch by nicking a 93rd minute winner on Boxing Day.

Oxford finished 2016 in mid-table and had plenty to look forward to in 2017.

Next week – how United's season played out in 2017

OCTOBER: Remember Dan Crowley? The Arsenal loanee scored two goals in his short stay in Oxford, including this consolation goal in a 2-1 loss at Coventry

DECEMBER: Midfielder John Lundstram battles the elements in search for a winning goal in a 1-1 draw with Oldham Athletic at the Kassam

Guardian Sport

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Blues flown to the Wolves!

By George Welch

A YOUNG Oxford RL side full of enthusiasm and spirit have returned home from their historic transatlantic adventure.

The Blues became the first English rugby league side to travel 3,500 miles to Canada as they faced the Toronto Wolfpack in the Kingstone Press League 1.

The first professional Canadian side were always favourites and ran out comfortable 62-12 winners in front of TV cameras and 6,200 fans at the Lamport Stadium on Saturday.

Formed last year, the world's first trans-Atlantic rugby league team won their first five league matches – all away from home – and welcomed Tim Romford's side for their first ever competitive home game.

The club pays for the travel costs of the League 1 clubs who visit Canada and subsidises some travel for travelling fans.

Boasting players from the top-flight and the Kingstone Press Championship as well as from New Zealand and Australia, it was no surprise the North American side ran riot.

Wolfpack wasted no time in exerting their dominance as Blake Wallace scored the first of the home side's solid 12-try performance on just three minutes.

The hosts were in no mood to be accommodating and hurried to a 34-0 lead on the half hour mark with tries from Andrew Dixon (10 minutes), Jonny Pownall (16), two for Richard Whiting (20, 27) and Ryan Brierley (23).

Oxford held off numerous attacks and the resilient spirit grew when Casey Canterbury showed sharp reactions to score on 31 minutes.

The interval came following another Dixon try (34) to send the teams in at 40-6.

The Blues reduced the second half scoring tally to 18-6 but the Wolfpack still extended their lead through Brierley (54) and Pownall's (61) second of the afternoon and further tries from Craig Hall (46) and Greg Worthington (51).

Tensions boiled over in the 69th minute when Toronto's Jake Emmitt was sin binned. He failed to leave the field and walked back to strike Blues centre Harvey Burnett.

This ignited a full on confrontation with both teams, ice hockey style.

Emmitt's yellow was upgraded to red and the card stayed out for Toronto's Wallace and Oxford's Callum Windley.

Oxford regained their composure and Canterbury crossed the line with nine minutes remaining for his and Oxford's second try.

Wolfpack's Ryan Burroughs scored four minutes later to ensure that Toronto's final try of a ground-breaking day would be scored by a man from North America.

Toronto consolidated their place at the top of the table with the win.

The Blues, who slipped a position to 11th, are urging fans to welcome the team back when they host Hunslet, the oldest club in the league, at Tilsley Park on Sunday. Kick off is at 2pm.

Above, Wolfpack player is tussled to floor. Right, ice-hockey-style brawl

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